

United Nations Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

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The Law of the Sea Convention discussed how to preserve and sustain healthy bodies of water around the world, which cover 70% of the planet. As Rio+20 approaches, states acknowledged that efforts to achieve previous commitments aimed at sustainably managing the marine environment have been insufficient and significant gaps in implementation remain. Effectively conserving and sustainably managing marine biodiversity is essential for food security, supporting sustainable livelihoods and maintaining economic prosperity. States need urgently to take steps to ensure the long-term sustainability of marine species and ecosystems as a means of achieving sustainable development.

Key mandates discussed surrounding sustainable oceans and the “blue economy:” (definition: *an international community of companies, innovators and scientists, providing open source access to develop, implement and share prosperous business models that strive to improve natural ocean ecosystems and the quality of life for all*).

- End destructive fishing practices
- Implement the precautionary principle and ecosystem approach in decision making
- Stop overfishing, and address overcapacity and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing
- End subsidies that contribute to fishing overcapacity
- Implement prior environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments to prevent or minimize human impacts on the ocean for new and emerging activities as well as for fishing activities
- Identify, establish, and effectively manage protected areas in the ocean including marine reserves
- Implement effective monitoring, control, surveillance, compliance, and enforcement measures.
- Promote sustainable ecotourism, which provides social, economic, and environmental benefits to coastal states.

Other relevant issues that surfaced in debate

- The need for global food security and sustainable fishing
- Lack of marine-protected areas
- Elevated responsibility for developed nations to mobilize the blue economy and provide technology transfers + capacity building
- Ocean acidification

- Cooperation and coordination of the three pillars of sustainable development (**ecological, economic, and social**) needed in policy implementation
- Elimination of illegal and unreported fishing

Presentations

1.

- Small island developing states have most demand for a blue economy, but strategy and implementation is fragmented
- Restrict high sea fishing
- WTO talks of subsidies for sustainable fishing have not gone very far
- Enforce an index for ocean health
- Limit scientific catches of whales
- Acidification monitoring
- Tax/limit use of plastic
- International set of recommendations on sustainable under-ocean drilling
- Rio +20 must address desalination, marine energies, and agriculture

2. Relationship Between the Oceans and the Three Pillars of Sustainable Development” By Cherdsak Virapat

Three pillars of sustainable development affect Blue Economy

1. Ecological
2. Economic
3. Social

- Fisheries and aquaculture
 - Food security
 - Employment
 - In 2006, 43.5 million directly involved in fish production
- Economic development
 - Goods and services from oceans accumulate to \$33 trillion USD yearly
- Increased economic activity in coastal zones threatens ecological state of the oceans.
- Environmental protection
- Marine pollution
- Ecological balance
- Habitat change
 - Nexus between oceans and coasts: Humans failed to live with ocean in a sustainable relationship, so a “blue society” must change its behaviors.
 - Sustainable development correlates directly with community knowledge and empowerment

- Oceans are a laboratory for a new international order, new economic theory, new philosophy, and good governance.