

GLOBAL OCEAN FORUM NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2012

Global Ocean Forum at Rio+20

Overview

In this issue, we feature steady movement toward refining and strengthening the oceans, coasts, and small island States sections of the Rio+20 negotiating document, especially through the submissions of the NGO Oceans Cluster and of the Global Ocean Forum. This is in anticipation of the next round of Rio+20 negotiations which will be held on March 19-23, 2012 (informal/informals) and March 26-27, 2012 (Third Intersessional Meeting). During the Intersessional, please look for a side event on oceans on March 26, 2012 at 6:15 PM, co-organized by the Global Ocean Forum, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, and the UN Permanent Delegations of Fiji and Seychelles.

In a major initiative, the President of the World Bank, Robert. B. Zoellick, has announced a wide-ranging Global Ocean Partnership to confront major threats to ocean and coastal resources. Significant engagement by the World Bank in the oceans sustainable development agenda is expected to bring a new level of political commitment and resources on the problems and issues facing coastal and island communities around the world.

The Global Ocean Forum has announced the organization of a major ocean event during the Rio+20 summit (on June 16, 2012), Advancing Oceans and Coasts at Rio+20 and Beyond, aimed to make a final push on oceans in the Rio negotiations, anticipate implementation challenges, and feature major initiatives on oceans. Proposals for panels, speakers, and partnerships to be featured are invited until April 15, 2012.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Rolph Payet, Presidential Advisor on Oceans to the President of Seychelles, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Seychelles, and member of the Global Ocean Forum's International Board of Directors, to his appointment as Minister of Environment and Energy of the Cabinet, Republic of Seychelles.

In the next two issues of Global Ocean Forum News, we will feature the results of the Rio+20 Third Intersessional Meeting and issues related to marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) relevant to the forthcoming UN negotiations on ABNJ slated for May 7-11, 2012.

Dr. Biliانا Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum

Global Ocean Forum to Organize Major Oceans Event at Rio+20

The Global Ocean Forum, State Oceanic Administration (SOA) of the People's Republic of China, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) will organize a major high-level oceans event at the Rio+20 Conference, Advancing Oceans and Coasts at Rio+20 and Beyond, on June 16, 2012. The event will bring together high-level representatives from governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, industry, and the science community to:

- (1) Continue to push for a strong oceans outcome at the negotiations of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20);
- (2) Showcase major funded initiatives to spur action on oceans, coasts, and small island developing States in the post-Rio+20 world; and
- (3) Consider the opportunities and challenges for implementation of the “oceans package” emanating from the Rio+20 Conference.

The flyer for the event is available here:

<http://www.globaloceans.org/sites/udel.edu.globaloceans/files/Rio20-GOF-Event-Flyer.pdf>.

This event will also celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Global Ocean Forum, which was formed to help the world's governments place issues related to oceans, coasts, and small island developing States on the agenda of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The organizers are currently accepting proposals for panels, speakers, and announcements of funded partnerships/initiatives to be highlighted during the event. Those interested in proposing a panel or a new partnership/initiative to be highlighted are asked to complete and return the form found here, no later than April 15, 2012.

World Bank Forms a Global Partnership for Oceans

The World Bank has announced the formation of a coalition of governments, international organizations, civil society groups and members of the private sector, under the banner of a Global Partnership for Oceans (see: <http://www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org/>) to confront major threats to ocean and coastal resources, including overfishing and habitat loss.

The Partnership was announced by Robert B. Zoellick, the President of the World Bank, at The Economist's World Oceans Summit on February 24, 2012, in Singapore, and will draw on the knowledge, expertise, and financial support of all its partners to help rebuild the natural capital of the oceans in a number of priority regions around the world.

Through the partnership, various organizations, governments, and companies will coordinate their efforts in areas such as:

- Protecting and restoring habitats and species required for maintaining ecosystem services and livelihoods;
- Managing risks to ocean health, including from land-based pollution and offshore extractive industries risks;
- Fostering global advocacy for sustainable and climate-resilient communities and economies;
- Sharing knowledge of innovation and solutions.

Thus far, a number of organizations have been invited to join the Partnership, including: the Global Ocean Forum, International Finance Corporation, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Global Environment Facility, the UN Development Programme, UN Environment Programme, UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic, Conservation International, Environmental Defense Fund, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), National Geographic Society, The Nature Conservancy, Oceana, RARE, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, the National Fisheries Institute, the World Ocean Council, Paine and Partners, and Seafood Experience Australia (SEA).

The Global Ocean Forum welcomes this new initiative and looks forward to collaborating with the World Bank and the Global Partnership to heighten political commitment and financing levels to achieve improved ocean and coastal governance.

Global Ocean Forum Submits Input to Rio+20 Zero Draft

Continuing its efforts to support governments in developing a strong ocean outcome at the Rio+20 Conference, the Global Ocean Forum has sent its suggested revisions to the Rio+20 zero draft, outlining areas where the zero draft text can be strengthened and made more actionable and targeted to achieve major sustainable development goals for oceans, coasts, and small island developing states (SIDS) (Revisions to Rio+20 Zero Draft available here: <http://www.globaloceans.org/sites/udel.edu.globaloceans/files/Zero-draft-text-GOF.pdf>).

The GOF has also compiled recommendations for consideration by governments in forthcoming negotiations on the zero draft of the Rio+20 outcome document (Available here: <http://www.globaloceans.org/sites/udel.edu.globaloceans/files/GOF-Recommendations-OceansAndCoasts-Rio20.pdf>).

These recommendations and suggested revisions to the zero draft text are based on the multi-stakeholder consultations and policy analyses that the Global Ocean Forum has conducted, and are drawn primarily from the Global Ocean Forum report, *Oceans at Rio+20: How Well Are We Doing in Meeting the Commitments from the 1992 Earth Summit and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development?* The Summary for Decision Makers can be downloaded at: <http://www.globaloceans.org/sites/udel.edu.globaloceans/files/Rio20SummaryReport.pdf>.

NGO Major Groups Submit Suggested Revisions/Additions to the Rio+20 Zero

As governments continue to deliberate on the Rio+20 outcome, the Organizing Partners of the Rio+20 Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Major Group have decided to organize the wide range of NGO participants into various issue-area “clusters” to more effectively organize substantive input into the Rio+20 process, and have designated facilitators for these clusters.

The Global Ocean Forum, the Pew Environment Group, the International Ocean Institute, and Greenpeace have been designated as co-facilitators for the “Oceans Cluster” of the NGO Major Group, tasked with (1) submitting revisions/amendments to the Rio+20 zero draft on behalf of the NGO ocean community, and (2) coordinating Rio+20-related activities of NGOs on oceans. The co-facilitators play an organizational and coordinating role, helping to organize and put forth the views and inputs from the broader NGO ocean community.

Under a very short time frame, the co-facilitators collaborated with various members of the NGO ocean community to submit suggested revisions/additions to the Rio+20 zero draft on February 24, 2012 (original Rio+20 zero draft is available here: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/futurewewant.html>), which outlines the perspectives and priorities of various members of the NGO ocean community. (UNCSD Ocean Cluster Draft Text Recommendations available at: <http://www.globaloceans.org/sites/udel.edu.globaloceans/files/NGO-OceanCluster-Recommendations.pdf>). These outline some of the key priorities of the ocean community and were then incorporated into consolidated input of the NGO Major Group in all of the clusters.

There will no doubt be additional opportunities for including text and engaging in the Rio+20 process, so please look for future communications from the NGO Ocean Cluster co-facilitators, or contact Joe Appiott at jappiott@udel.edu.

Global Ocean Forum Named Oceans Lead in the Rio Conventions Pavilion at Rio+20

The Global Ocean Forum, along with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), has been named the designated lead on ocean issues in the Rio Conventions Pavilion at the Rio+20 Conference.

The Rio Conventions Pavilion is a collaborative effort among the Secretariats of the three Rio Conventions (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification), the Global Environment Facility, and other global and local partners to strengthen synergies on the implementation of the Rio Conventions by providing a coordinated platform for awareness-raising and information sharing. The Rio Conventions Pavilion serves as an important platform for dialogue and information-sharing at various global negotiations on issues such as climate change and biodiversity.

Further information about the Rio Conventions Pavilion can be found here:

<http://www.riopavilion.org>.

The Global Ocean Forum will be compiling a list of all ocean events at Rio+20 to help achieve maximum synergy among various ocean activities. Groups or individuals planning on organizing ocean events at Rio+20 are invited to send information to Gwenaelle Hamon, Global Ocean Forum, Email: ghamon@udel.edu; Fax: +1-302-831-3668.

Recap of January Negotiations on the Rio+20 Zero

The initial discussions of the Rio+20 zero draft took place from January 25-27, 2012 at the UN Headquarters in New York, NY. The zero draft, which will form the basis for the Rio+20 outcome, was developed by the UNCSD Preparatory Committee, based on the submissions from Member States, political groups, UN organizations, IGOs, and NGOs. The meeting was focused on the first two sections of the draft, the Preamble and the section on “Renewing Political Commitment.” Delegates expressed the need for an ambitious, action-oriented document that achieves a balance among the three pillars. In his remarks, Mr. Sha Zukang, UNCSD Secretary-General, noted that the magnitude of challenges Rio+20 aims to address mandates an ambitious and pragmatic outcome. The discussions outlined the need for a viable framework for action, including the need for mobilization of financing, stakeholder engagement, and utilizing science, education, innovation, and partnerships, to attain sustainable development goals.

Issues related to oceans and coasts played a central role in the discussions on the zero draft. In particular, the small island developing States, including AOSIS, CARICOM, the Pacific SIDS, and the Pacific Island Forum, commented on the relationship between oceans and climate change, the need to address the challenges SIDS face in a comprehensive manner, the opportunities available to SIDS through the “blue” green economy, and the need to ensure that the benefits from SIDS’ ocean resources are maximized and accrue to them. UNESCO, on behalf of IOC, noted the need for improved ocean governance structures under the Conference theme of Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD).

It was recognized that, while the zero draft currently lacks the appropriate ambition, it provides the appropriate framework for developing a viable outcome. A prominent topic of discussion was the potential development of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which should complement and not replace the Millennium Development Goals, although delegates recognized that it may be difficult to develop and reach agreement on SDGs given the many diverging perspectives on various issues under discussion.

The role of civil society, and their engagement in the process, was a central topic of discussion. Although the Rio+20 process is a Member State-driven process, delegates agreed on the need to ensure that the interests and perspectives of civil society were incorporated into the Conference discussions and outcome, including through the Major Groups.

Despite the many challenges that were raised at the meeting, a feeling of optimism for a positive outcome was noted by the UNCSD Secretary-General. The next round of negotiations, the first round of ‘informal-informal’ negotiations on the zero draft of outcome document will take place from March 19-21, 2012, at the UN Headquarters in New York.

The Earth Negotiations Bulletin Summary of the Initial Discussions on the Zero Draft of the Outcome Document for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, 25-27 January 2012, is available here: <http://www.iisd.ca/uncsd/idzod/compilation.pdf>.