

# Oceans at Rio+20: Toward Implementation of the Rio Ocean Commitments

Organized by the Global Ocean Forum

The event, moderated by Richard Delaney, Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, reported on the outcomes of Oceans Day at Rio+20, highlighting tangible commitments for oceans, coasts and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) made by the global ocean community at Rio+20. The event also highlighted the Rio Ocean Declaration, which addresses priority action items for the oceans both at and after Rio+20.

Amb. Neroni Slade, Secretary General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, explained the purpose of Oceans Day, which considered opportunities and challenges of implementing the “oceans package” at Rio+20. He said that issues dealt with at Oceans Day included: climate change and oceans; integrated ocean governance; marine protected areas, marine pollution and the move towards the blue economy. He added that its outcomes included 12 Voluntary Commitments and the Rio Ocean Declaration.

Andrew Hudson, UNDP, discussed a recent UN report “Catalysing Ocean Finance,” which revealed that overfishing, hypoxia, and acidification are geometrically worsening, caused by market failures. He added that the failure of putting a price on carbon is leading to the acidification of oceans. Noting that funding for sustainable development and ocean governance already exists through the GEF, he deplored the lack of political will to make difficult choices to reverse exponential ocean degradation issues.

Lynne Hale, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), presented on climate and oceans, focusing on adaptation and DRR. She underscored that the management and defense of coastal communities is the most costly component of climate change adaptation. Hale added that coastal ecosystems conservation reduces vulnerability and creates blue economy jobs. She concluded by stressing the importance of climate change mitigation and implementing ecosystem-based adaptation strategies.

Manuel Cira, Coordinator, World Ocean Network, calling for more cooperation with governmental agencies and businesses, stressed the need for new funding mechanisms to sustain innovation and research, and emphasized the importance of new and innovative ways of using the ocean sustainably, rather than only changing operations to reduce marine pollution.

During the ensuing discussion, Hudson noted a decrease in the frequency of large-scale oil spills, but a dramatic increase its traffic, and lamented the high incidence of salmon aquaculture that has reached critical proportions. On non-traditional partners in the protection of the ocean, Delaney lauded the US navy’s funding initiative to transform their vessel fuel use to renewable energy sources. Hale lamented the nonexistence of a model of action for policy making in the absence of scientific evidence and emphasized the urgency for innovative ideas. Slade, warning against taking the ocean for granted, underscored that even though humanity does not fully understand oceanic complexities it remains dependent on them, given that oceans are where the planet, people and prosperity unite.



Lynne Hale, The Nature Conservancy, underscored that insurance companies and not only the NGO community have concluded that coastal ecosystem conservation is cost effective.



Manuel Cira, Coordinator, World Ocean Network, solicited “thinking out of the box” to devise new ways of using the ocean’s resources.

#### More information:

<http://www.globaloceans.org/sites/udel.edu.globaloceans/files/OceansDayAtRio20Program.pdf>

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United Nations Conference

L-R: Manuel Cira, Coordinator, World Ocean Network; Richard Delaney, Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies; Amb. Neroni Slade, Secretary General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; Andrew Hudson, UNDP; and Lynne Hale, The Nature Conservancy