

10th Edition of the Monaco Blue Initiative: 25 March 2019

The 10th edition of the Monaco Blue Initiative (MBI) convened on Monday, 25 March, at the Oceanographic Institute of Monaco. The meeting addressed the theme of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and took place under the presidency of HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco. The event gathered more than 140 participants representing international organizations, governments, academia, the private sector and NGOs.

Launched in 2010 on the initiative of HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, the MBI is a platform for discussion that is co-organized by the Oceanographic Institute, the Prince Albert I of Monaco Foundation and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation. Its members meet annually to discuss current and future challenges of ocean management and conservation. The 10th meeting clarified the ambition and method necessary for setting the scene for the post-2020 period, when current global MPA targets are set to be achieved, and discussed the importance of ecological and social networks for ensuring the effectiveness of MPAs as well as the links between MPAs and the economy of the ocean.

Opening

HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco opened the meeting, stating that the MBI helped put MPAs on the international agenda. He stressed the role of MPAs as an effective tool against the threats facing the ocean, as well as their economic benefits. Prince Albert II highlighted that challenges ahead include the need to reinforce existing MPAs, and to increase both the number of MPAs and networks. He warned that vague MPA categories could lead to confusion, and called for precise goals and a global vision for implementing new MPAs. Calling for new MPAs both within national jurisdictions and in the context of the future Treaty on the High Seas, Prince Albert II also underlined the lack of efficiency of existing MPAs, stressing that tools like trust funds could address financing problems. Finally, he underlined the importance of involving all stakeholders in assessing different options for MPAs.

Session 1: How to Collectively Continue Developing MPAs Whilst Ensuring Their Efficiency

This first session was chaired by Jane Lubchenco, Oregon State University. The panel brought together: Romain Renoux,



L-R: **Vincent Meriton**, Vice President of the Republic of Seychelles; **Jane Lubchenco**, Oregon State University; HSH Prince **Albert II** of Monaco; **Brune Poirson**, Secretary of State to the Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, France; **Karmenu Vella**, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries; and **Haydee Rodriguez**, Vice Minister of Waters and Seas, Costa Rica



L-R: **Romain Renoux**, Association for sustainable financing of MPAs in the Mediterranean; **Mark J. Spalding**, Ocean Foundation and Commissioner of the Sargasso Sea Commission; **Jane Lubchenco**, Oregon State University; and **François Houllier**, Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer

Association for the Sustainable Financing of Mediterranean MPAs; François Houllier, CEO, Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (Ifremer); Mark J. Spalding, President, the Ocean Foundation; and Ricardo Serrão Santos, Member of the European Parliament (*in absentia*).

Lubchenco introduced the key issues to be discussed, including: MPA definitions and objectives; progress, challenges and ambitions; MPAs and economic development; and MPAs in the wider context of the sustainable use of biodiversity. She stressed the progress made in the percentage of the ocean covered by MPAs since Aichi target 11 was set in 2010, and the need to address three specific questions on MPAs: what can be considered an MPA?; when can an MPA be considered a true protected area?; what are the different levels of protection for MPAs?

She highlighted that a coalition of governmental and NGO partners will soon release an MPA guide that will help harmonize the language used to describe MPA stages of establishment and levels of protection to inform work on the post-2020 agenda of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Lubchenco transmitted the words of Serrão Santos (*in absentia*), who underscored there is nothing worse than inefficient MPAs or “paper parks” to discredit MPAs. He stressed the problem is not that the targets are too ambitious in terms of area coverage, it is the bad implementation of these targets.

Renoux focused on the Mediterranean, of which 7% of the area is covered by MPAs but less than 0.05% by MPAs with strong protection (no-go MPAs). Renoux stressed the problem of insufficient and sporadic funding for ensuring effective management of these MPAs, with only 12% of the financial needs covered for the region. He presented the Environmental Fund for Mediterranean MPAs, an initiative launched in 2013

by France, Monaco, Tunisia and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation. This conservation trust fund raises and invests funds to make grants to NGOs and MPA management authorities. Renoux also stressed the importance of building local alliances.

Houllier highlighted the lack of scientific knowledge for marine conservation, and stressed the specificities of MPAs regarding species connectivity and the absence of strict boundaries in the ocean. He highlighted the role of research institutes for filling knowledge gaps, and for supporting public policy by demonstrating the benefits of establishing MPAs. Houllier also stressed the need for interdisciplinarity between ecology, economics and the law when designating new MPAs.

Spalding recalled that MPAs are tools to manage human activities. The goal is to decrease anthropogenic pressures in order to maintain life in MPAs. He reflected on the success of the previous 10 years and stressed that MPAs require political will. He then highlighted that the ocean is the common heritage of all humankind, and that this should be reflected in the negotiations on the protection of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Keynote Speeches

Brune Poirson, French Secretary of State to the Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, highlighted the need for more ambition for the ocean. She stressed that the ocean is currently seen as a lever of economic opportunity, but that sustainability and MPAs should be at the heart of the discussion. She referred to the political momentum being mobilized with the next session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD in 2020, and highlighted France's efforts to build a strong coalition on climate, oceans and climate finance at the next G7 meeting in France in 2019. Poirson also underlined the issue of

financing for biodiversity protection, insisting that the money should come from those who harm biodiversity and that potential investors should take environmental risk into account.

Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, highlighted the intensifying threats to the ocean and the progress made by the European Union (EU) in the previous two years. He highlighted the EU's MPA network, which is equivalent in size to Spain, but noted significant differences in coverage and implementation across regions. Vella stressed that well-managed MPAs benefit the economy and highlighted the work of the EU to help create MPAs in Africa and the Caribbean and train MPA managers. He underlined that stakeholders' goal should be the conservation of the entire ocean, with MPAs representing the highest level of ambition.

Chuanlin Huo, Deputy Director General of the Department of Marine Ecology and Environment, Chinese Ministry of Ecology and Environment, spoke of the challenges in developing a sustainable economy of the ocean, stressing that China promotes "a community of shared destiny" on this issue, based on its experience in fighting pollution in urban and rural areas. He outlined China's progress on MPAs including: expansion of the network; an MPAs roadmap in several provinces; improvement of the legal system for MPAs; establishment of marine monitoring stations for long-term research; better control and enforcement; and action at the international level. He also stressed the importance of CBD COP 15, which will be the occasion to build the framework for biodiversity protection beyond 2020.

Session 2: How do Coherent MPA Networks Contribute to Protecting Species?

This session was chaired by Alexander Tudhope, Professor, University of Edinburgh. Panelists included: Rachel Graham, CEO, MarAlliance; Haydee Rodríguez, Vice Minister of Waters and Seas, Costa Rica; Serge Planes, Research Director, National Centre for Scientific Research, France; Olivier Laroussinie, Deputy Delegate to the Sea and Coastline, Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, France; and Purificacio Canals, President, Mediterranean Network of Marine Protected Areas (MedPAN)

Introducing the session, Tudhope stressed that essential elements for successful MPA networks are recognition of diverse life histories and ecological connectivities, as well as explicit support for MPA managers and other key stakeholders to form communities of practice and sharing.

Graham underlined that what galvanized the creation of MPAs was the protection of species, but said that data was missing on these species and the way forward is to rely on and empower local and traditional communities. She highlighted that community-driven MPAs are the most successful due the high level of compliance.

Rodríguez presented the specificities of Costa Rica in terms of biodiversity protection, stressing that what has been done on land should now be done at sea. She described the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (CMAR), a regional and cross-border initiative for the conservation of marine resources, and stressed the need to improve spatial planning and coordination to properly protect the areas' species.



L-R: **Karmenu Vella**, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries; **Alexander Tudhope**, University of Edinburgh; **Purificacio Canals**, Mediterranean Network of Marine Protected Areas; **Olivier Laroussinie**, Deputy delegate to the Sea and Coastline, Ministry for the Ecological & Inclusive Transition, France; **Haydee Rodríguez**, Vice-Minister of Waters and Seas, Costa Rica; **Serge Planes**, National Centre for Scientific Research, France; and **Rachel Graham**, MarAlliance

Planes stressed the recurrent oppositions between local and national interests in MPAs, and the importance of building networks of communities inside and outside MPAs that create local support for enforcement. He gave examples of fish spawning aggregations benefiting communities outside an MPA in Papua New Guinea, and the traditional concept of Rahui in French Polynesia that is now used for creating new MPAs.

Laroussinie discussed how to link national MPAs to larger ecological networks when these networks cross different jurisdictions. He stressed that some tools already exist and that more coherence is required between them. He also highlighted the opportunity of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development for developing specific programs on connectivity and networks, and on interactions with human activities.

Canals talked about the importance of having networks of managers to improve the effectiveness of MPAs, stressing that actions must be based on scientific and traditional knowledge, as well as on social skills. She presented MedPAN, a network of 19 countries from the Mediterranean that build capacity for MPA management.

Session 3: What is the Next Step After the Evaluation of Ecosystem Services and How Can This Be Integrated Into Blue Economic Development?

Maria Damanaki, Global Managing Director, The Ocean Conservancy, chaired this session. The panel included: Peter Herzig, Director, GEOMAR; Olivia Langmead, Plymouth University; Mia Pantzar, Institute for European Environmental Policy; Vincent Meriton, Vice-President of the Republic of

Seychelles; and Abdou Karim Sall, President, MPA; Joal Fadiouth, Senegal.

Damanaki introduced the session by stressing that if ambitious goals for MPAs are shared, we still need to work on how to implement them. She said implementation requires financing, and that the private sector must be at the table. The concepts of natural capital and ecosystem services can help in increasing the money available for oceans conservation. She called for the creation of a coalition of actors for financing MPAs.

Herzig discussed the major threats faced by the ocean and the projections in demographics that show the challenges and urgency of protecting them. He called for: 50% of the oceans to be covered by MPAs by 2050; making the Southern Ocean and the High Seas an MPA; strong protection, that is “no take, no change, no impact”; more solution-oriented research; and internationally binding rules.

He also questioned why there was a European Space Agency but no European Ocean Agency, and an International Seabed Authority but no International Ocean Authority.

Langmead stressed that we are far from the economic valuation of marine ecosystem services and natural capital. One of the main limitations is the availability and quality of data on how species and habitats support the delivery of ecosystem services. Moreover, more valuation work has been done on provisioning services than on regulating services. Langmead presented a modeling approach to explore the linkages between seabed habitats and their potential to provide ecosystem services. She explained that the findings highlight the importance of high levels of protection in realizing the potential of seabed habitats in terms of their ecosystem service provision.



L-R: **Olivia Langmead**, Plymouth University; **Abdou Karim Sall**, MPA Joal Fadiouth, Senegal; **Maria Damanaki**, The Nature Conservancy; **Vincent Meriton**, Vice President of the Republic of Seychelles; **Mia Pantzar**, Institute for European Environmental Policy; and **Peter Herzig**, GEOMAR

Pantzar talked about growing evidence of tangible economic benefits from MPAs in Europe, in terms of income and new jobs. However, she highlighted the lack of robust empirical evidence, with most of the numbers being extrapolations from models, including from sectors other than tourism and fisheries. She also stressed that benefits from MPAs will only come from well-managed and financed MPAs.

Meriton underlined that the blue economy in Seychelles was built on four pillars: food and nutrition, economic diversification, maritime safety and security, and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems. He presented the Seychelles' Marine Spatial Plan, a government-led, multi-stakeholder process. According to the Plan, 15% of Seychelles waters will be under strong MPAs, 15% under a sustainable use regime, and 70% for multiple uses. He explained that this Plan was part of his country's Blue Economy Roadmap, and the result of a debt swap mechanism that allows the financing of MPAs through a trust fund.

Sall presented the MPA Joal Fadiouth in Senegal, which is based on a shared governance mechanism between government and local communities, with the objectives of improving both biodiversity conservation and the socio-economic conditions of local communities. He highlighted the positive interactions between mangrove reforestation, the production of oysters and the creation of artificial reefs made of shells, but warned against external threats to the MPA, giving the example of a project of offshore oil installation within the MPA.

Keynote Speech

José Apolinario, Portuguese Secretary of State for Fisheries, underlined his country's efforts to lead the race on MPAs in Europe and announced that the Second UN Ocean Conference will be held in Lisbon in June 2020. He also stressed the creation of a coalition of Portuguese stakeholders that brings knowledge and expertise upon which to design new MPAs.

Ocean Updates

Updates were provided regarding several key current topics.



Peggy Kalas, the High Seas Alliance

Peggy Kalas, the High Seas Alliance, and Marco Lambertini Director General, WWF International, presented the work of the High Seas Alliance to foster an ambitious Treaty with a global mechanism to establish a network of MPAs in the high seas.

Geneviève Pons, Jacques Delors Institute, presented the efforts of the Antarctica2020 platform to secure large MPAs in the Southern Ocean.

Sabine Jessen, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and Dan Laffoley, IUCN, presented the outcomes of the last International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC4) and what is to be expected from the next edition in Vancouver, Canada.

Closing Address

François Simard, on behalf of Inger Andersen, Director General, IUCN, concluded the meeting by stressing that for MPAs to be effectively and equitably managed, more work needs to be done on: partnerships, connectivity aspects, and MPAs' integration into the wider seascape and blue economy. He also highlighted the emerging discussion about including in the negotiations on the High Seas the concept of common public goods, as this new UN treaty is of concern for all of humankind. Simard also stressed that the need beyond MPAs development is to ensure that 100% of the ocean is managed sustainably and effectively, and that the MPAs networks provide real conservation of ecosystem services for supporting sustainable development. He invited participants to attend the World Conservation Congress in Marseille in June 2020, where these topics will be discussed several months before CBD COP15 in China.

Upcoming Meetings

BBNJ IGC-2: The 2nd Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on an International Legally Binding Instrument under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction will address the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits, marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments and capacity building and the transfer of marine technology. **dates:** 25 March - 5 April 2019 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea **phone:** +1-212-963-3962 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** doalos@un.org **www:** <https://www.un.org/bbnj/>

European Maritime Day 2019: This special day highlights the fundamental role that the ocean and seas play in the lives of the coastal communities and citizens of the European Union. **date:** 20 May 2019 **location:** Lisbon, Portugal **www:** http://www.miss-ocean.com/Conferences_Exhibitions/European_Maritime_Days/European_Maritime_Day_Lisbon_2019.htm

Our Ocean Wealth Summit: This conference will enable participating countries to share experiences in addressing the multiple challenges facing the ocean. **date:** 6-7 June 2019 **location:** Cork, Ireland **contact:** Marine Coordination Group Bureau **phone:** +353-1-6072902 **email:** MarineCoordinationGroupBureau@agriculture.gov.ie **www:** <https://www.ouroceanwealth.ie/oow-summit>

ICP-20: The 20th meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea will focus its discussions on the topic "Ocean Science and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development." **dates:** 10-14 June 2019 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea **phone:** +1-212-963-5915 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** doalos@un.org **www:** http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm