



PRINCE ALBERT II  
OF MONACO  
FOUNDATION



Oceanographic  
Institute  
Prince Albert I of Monaco Foundation

## 11<sup>th</sup> Monaco Blue Initiative – Digital Edition

Workshop # 1 - 28 May 2020

*How can we place Marine Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures at the center of international discussions and act collectively for their development?*

### Summary of the discussions

The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Monaco Blue Initiative, planned for March 2020 in Monaco, had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak. In the spirit of resilience and mobilization, His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco and the Steering Committee of the Monaco Blue Initiative, wished to keep the momentum and offer a space for debating and making progress on the themes of the [11<sup>th</sup> MBI through three online workshops](#). Below is the preliminary summary of the first workshop.

**Moderator:** Mr Jose Maria Figueres Olsen, Former President of Costa Rica, Co-founder and Board Chair of Ocean Unite.

**Panelists:** H.E. Mr Serge Segura, Ambassador of France for the Oceans; Dr Enric Sala, Explorer in Residence, National Geographic; Ms Sabine Jessen, Executive Director, 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress Secretariat, Government of Canada; Dr Atsushi Sunami, President, Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation; Ms Shirley Binder, National Director of Environmental Policy, Ministry of Environment, Panama and Edinburgh 2020 “Ocean Leader”.

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Held in the presence of HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, this first session began with a welcome address by the Prince and keynote speeches by Ms Brune Poirson, Secretary of State to the Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition of France and Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius, EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries.

Panelists from the Americas, Europe and Asia then discussed the current status, plans, objectives and challenges of MPAs and so-called “Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs), and the local,

bilateral, regional and international tools and possibilities for negotiation and action to advance marine conservation.

**HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco** recalled the context of this special virtual edition - that of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has shown that our world is more vulnerable than we thought, but also that we are collectively capable of rapid change.

The Prince urged a change in the collective attitude towards the marine environment and marine resources. This should incorporate an international point of view regarding development and reinforcement of protected areas, requiring discussion in multilateral forums, but also a more local perspective on how MPAs are managed, with greater involvement of coastal populations.

Marine protected areas need to be developed much more efficiently. Ten years ago, the international community pledged to protect 10 percent of marine areas, but this target has not been reached, while many – including the Prince – believe the target today should be 30 percent by 2030.

MPAs offer very real economic opportunities, which are crucial to their success, and which justify appropriate funding. The trust fund Monaco created with France and Tunisia to develop MPAs in the Mediterranean (The MedFund) recently committed to funding worth 1.8 million Euros for MPAs in Tunisia and Albania over the next five years. These funds will be allocated to local civil society organisations and national agencies in charge of protected areas to ensure sustainable effective management practices.

Protection measures differ from one area to another, Prince Albert pointed out. For action to have an effect, we need to guarantee the real implementation of these measures and to more effectively adapt conservation tools to the various ecosystems and threats they face, while ensuring better coordination between them.

He called for the implementation of a genuine blue economy reconciling human needs with those of the ocean. To address these often conflicting challenges, we must look at things practically, basing ourselves on experiences and observations, and be unafraid to speak of failures and weaknesses, as well as success stories. This is the whole point of the Monaco Blue Initiative, He said: to engage all the players involved in dialogue, to gain a better understanding of the issues, and to assess the actions we have undertaken. This how we will be able to place the oceans at the heart of our development paradigm.

In her keynote speech, France's **Brune Poirson** called the COVID-19 pandemic a terrible reminder of the increase of human pressure on natural resources, species and habitats, which has undermined resilience and increased the risk of disease. However, the pandemic also provides an opportunity to highlight the necessity of protecting biodiversity.

France supports protecting 30 percent of land and oceans by 2030. With Costa Rica it is co-piloting the High Ambition Coalition to gather a critical mass of countries to support adoption of the 30 percent target in all upcoming international negotiations and events like the IUCN Global Congress, IMPAC5 and CBD COP15.

France is currently developing a national strategy for implementing the 30-percent target by 2022, with stronger protection measures for one-third. Increasing MPAs' surface and ensuring their effective management at a large scale is also important with regard to climate regulation, she noted.

While the High Seas account for more than 60 percent of global oceans, and represent many ecologically significant areas, the current 1.2 percent protection is clearly insufficient. France has submitted proposals to create two large-scale High Seas MPAs: the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount under the OSPAR Convention, and the East Antarctica MPA in the Southern Ocean, under CCAMLR. These two regional seas conventions are the only bodies currently having a mandate to

create MPAs in the High Seas, which makes it crucial to conclude the future global agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).

The aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis can either push environmental issues to the background or pinpoint them as the causes of this health crisis and increase the will to address them. We have a collective political responsibility to make sure that the second solution prevails, Ms Poirson concluded.

European Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Commissioner **Virginijus Sinkevičius** also drew a parallel between the historic health crisis on land and that of the marine environment, upon whose health humans and the planet depend. Today's Monaco Blue Initiative comes just one week after the European Commission published its ambitious EU Biodiversity Strategy. It reflected the conviction that we cannot treat the biodiversity crisis in isolation or only at a national or sectoral level - human pressure such as overexploitation, pollution or global warming require a regional, even global, vision. Marine Protected Areas and other conservation measures are among the most effective ways to address both the biodiversity and climate emergencies at once.

Although the EU has achieved the Aichi and SDG 14 target of conserving at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas by 2020, globally, marine protected area coverage reaches just 7.5 percent, with an even smaller percentage effectively managed, and close to zero protection in the High Seas. Scientists tell us we are approaching several tipping points, that 10 percent is no longer sufficient, and that unless we reach a certain coverage and proper connectivity between areas, MPAs will not be effective.

The European Commission's new Biodiversity Strategy proposes to increase the EU's network of marine protected areas and other effective conservation measures by 19 percent over the next ten years to achieve 30 percent by 2030, with a substantial part under strict protection. This year the EU will put forward guidance for identifying and designating additional areas, and for adequate management.

Achieving 30 percent will not be easy, especially now that the pandemic is taking a toll on economies and national budgets. It will require concrete commitment from Member States, supported by sufficient public and private funding. The EU must also reduce its overall footprint on the marine environment by managing land and blue economy activities sustainably, while using its international ocean governance policy to address global drivers of marine biodiversity loss.

An expansion of the MPAs to the High Seas is also necessary. The EU is involved in negotiations on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to conserve and sustainably use marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdictions. Adoption of this instrument would be one of the most significant achievements in ocean governance of our times, Mr Sinkevičius said.

Next year's COP 15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity will aim to adopt a new Global Framework for Biodiversity and the EU will make sure the oceans are in the heart of discussions. Lessons should be drawn from Aichi: targets have to be unambiguous, measurable and based on reliable science, with clear baselines and data underpinning the monitoring and review of progress.

A global agreement must respond to the sensitivities of partners at the table, in particular developing countries. This includes the mobilisation of financial resources, capacity building, ensuring food security, and sharing benefits from the use of genetic resources. It also includes respect for the rights and the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, and all stakeholders, including women, youth, civil society, local authorities, the private sector, academia and scientific institutions.

Only strong multilateral cooperation and coordination, based on mutual trust and awareness of our common destiny, will enable progress on these issues in the interest of all.

Opening the panel, moderator **Jose Maria Figueres Olsen** called for support for the target of 30 percent ocean protection by 2030, as science shows that is the minimum required to ensure the

planet's temperature does not rise more than 1.5 degrees. He applauded the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for adopting that target and for pushing for the protection of the Antarctic, discovered 200 years ago. This year's anniversary provides an opportunity to honour it by protecting its entire surrounding ocean, he suggested. These challenging times offer many opportunities to make a very strong show for the oceans.

This was supposed to be the Year of the Ocean and Biodiversity but will go down instead as the Year of the Pandemic, and the economic crisis will be severe, said France's Ocean Ambassador **Serge Segura**. He noted that most of the planned ocean events have been rescheduled, not cancelled, including the Our Ocean meeting in Palau, the fourth negotiation session on BBNJ, the CBD, the SDG14 meeting in Lisbon and the IUCN Congress in Marseille.

Action to promote tools of protection, of which MPAs are just one, can be taken at a variety of levels. Decisions can be taken on a national basis with respect to territorial waters or a country's EEZ, as long as they conform to the UN Law of the Sea. France's objective is to reach the level of 30 percent of protected areas by 2022, with 10 percent under a strict regime; all states can do this, Mr Segura affirmed.

Multilateralism with regard to biodiversity and protection of the ocean must be promoted. Existing tools developed by regional and sectoral organizations are effective and can be expanded, such as the "particularly sensitive sea areas" established by the IMO in significant zones at risk from shipping.

Regional fisheries management organizations, or RFMOs, are often criticized, but useful tools such as moratoriums and different fishing seasons can be developed within them by member states. Similarly, the International Seabed Authority's mining code has been delayed to allow the incorporation of tools to protect the ocean.

Segura expressed pessimism regarding work within original sea conventions such as Barcelona, Antarctica's CCAMLR, and OSPAR, where adoption of projects on the table is proving difficult due to insufficient political will among states. For years, states including France have been trying to find new ways, with many initiatives, coalitions and more. Perhaps there are too many - these coalitions should be joined up to be more powerful and efficient, he said.

Bilateral cooperation can be effective too, such as that of France with Japan on MPAs, and with India for capacity building and legislation in developing countries to create new MPAs. States must also work with civil society, which should be better represented in international meetings. Traditionally we think the international community is states and international organizations, but today civil society and public opinion have a role to play. No new ways of cooperating need to be installed however all can work if the political will is there.

**Sabine Jessen** has 25 years of experience working on MPAs in Canada, first with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society NGO (CPAWS) and now as a civil servant spearheading next year's IMPAC5 in Vancouver. Like the EU, Canada is strongly promoting the broad adoption of the target of 30 percent ocean protection by 2030.

All progress requires political will, a clear roadmap, and explicit targets. Canada was long stalled at less than 1 percent protection of its ocean until 2015, which brought new commitment and a clear plan to achieve the Aichi target. Civil society played a critical role, including her organization, which recommended an approach and mobilized public support for Marine Protected Areas. Canada's strong budgetary effort and civil service was also key to progressing to the current 14 percent ocean protection. This represents 800,000km<sup>2</sup> of Canada's Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific sea and coast.

Canada has also passed new legislation to support MPA effectiveness - prior to this, there were no minimum protection standards for MPAs. In response to a civil society complaint, national standards were developed, resulting in a blanket prohibition of oil and gas development, bottom trawling or dumping across all Marine Protected Areas. This took a 20-year fight, Ms Jessen noted.

Canada was a pioneer in using Other Effective Conservation Measures, with international guidance from the IUCN Taskforce and the CBD. Alongside MPAs, it's a very important tool to protect areas that might not fit the definition of a protected area but still make effective contributions to biodiversity conservation.

Indigenous peoples and traditional knowledge have an important role to play alongside science as we define and manage MPAs and move towards a 30 percent coverage. Canada is working with indigenous peoples to ensure new MPAs form the basis of strong local economies and hopes to showcase some inspiring examples of indigenous MPA leadership at IMPAC 5.

Canada will host IMPAC 5 in Vancouver in 2021 with the IUCN and CPAWS. It will have a strong virtual component to enable the participation of people from every corner of the world. The gathering will celebrate and learn from past achievements and work to develop a global roadmap to reach that 30 percent goal.

**Enric Sala** is founder and leader of Pristine Seas, the National Geographic Society's largest exploration, research and conservation project acting to protect the oceans' last wild places. It has worked effectively for ten years now with partners, communities and governments to create 22 of the world's largest MPAs, of which 21 are fully protected no-take areas.

This has changed the social norms, Dr Sala noted. Ten or fifteen years ago, it would have been inconceivable for country leaders to brag about banning extractive activities in large areas of the ocean. But now it has been shown to be economically beneficial, and there is healthy competition among country leaders to create protected areas.

Today, with the COVID pandemic, we hear that the environment is not the priority; we need to take care of people and the economy. This is essential, but we mustn't forget the origin of this pandemic, which is our broken relationship with nature, making fully protected MPAs even more important. Many people don't understand that to get more from the ocean you have to protect it strictly: research shows that protected Marine Protected Areas' economic value is at least four times that of protected areas allowing fishing.

Dr Sala points to the example of countries that have already shown the 30 percent target is possible. Working with Pristine Seas, Palau has strictly protected 80 percent of its waters; Seychelles, 30 percent; Niue in the South Pacific, 40 percent.

Chile, a major fishing country, has gone from less than 1 percent of its Exclusive Economic Zone in fully protected MPAs in 2010 to 24 percent today. They realized there was no future for their coastal economies or for fishing if they didn't set aside areas to help replenish the rest of the ocean, Dr Sala explained. What we have seen with these countries is leadership; they are showing the way, and this makes me hopeful that 30 percent is possible, he concluded.

**Atsushi Sunami** of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation's Ocean Policy Research Institute is also a former member of the Arctic Circle Advisory Board. Scientists play an important role in support of scaling up MPA protection to the proposed level of 30 percent and should work to promote this at the highest level of decision-making, he affirmed. When Japan hosted the G20 summit in 2019 scientists worked with the government to put the ocean and IUU fishing, marine plastics and blue carbon on the agenda to be discussed as priority issues.

Japan is collaborating with scientists in Saudi Arabia ahead of the Riyadh G20 scheduled in November. We need to keep pushing ocean issues as a priority agenda for international summit meetings to get leaders to agree on the ambitious post-Aichi target and to reaffirm the political commitment to adopt the BBNJ agreement.

The science and policy interface is key to supporting high-level decision-making and policy based on scientific evidence, with the precautionary approach as the guiding principle. Regarding MPAs or other area-based management tools we need proper assessment of marine biodiversity, ecosystem services, and the values and risks. The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, starting next year, provides a useful platform for us to strengthen interdisciplinary scientific research and promote international cooperation on capacity development.

Standardizing monitoring methods is one important task and we need to promote the use of multiple technologies including satellite data, aerial and underwater drones, supersonic waves and infrared radiation for ocean visualisation, and to disclose the information, Dr Sunami suggested.

He called for a holistic, comprehensive approach linking existing schemes, such as ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) or vulnerable marine ecosystems, uniting Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), the International Seabed Authority, the IMO, and the Arctic and Antarctic. The High Seas MPAs developed by CCAMLR set a useful example.

The scientific community's promotion of research and data sharing will play a vital role in bringing major stakeholders including China, Russia and others into constructive discussions, particularly as far as Asia is concerned. This was crucial to establishing the Arctic fishing moratorium in 2018. The international regime for the Arctic created a basis for scientific assessment, which led Arctic Council members and observer states Japan, China and South Korea to agree upon the ban, Dr Sunami noted.

We should also relate this to WTO negotiations towards eliminating harmful subsidies to overfishing and IUU fishing. Our institute OPRI is engaged in dialogues to contribute to high-level decision-making and affect policy implementation. We hope to host the Arctic Science ministerial meeting and the Arctic Circle Japan Forum in Tokyo in 2021 to advance the dialogue with Arctic stakeholders.

Regarding its bilateral and regional initiatives, Japan has had dialogues with China and East and SE Asian countries concerning the Pacific, with France on policies for achieving sustainable oceans, and recently with various African countries on MPAs and ocean management at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). It is also working with the government of Palau to prepare the Our Ocean conference in December, where Japan will discuss how to effectively implement MPAs around the South Pacific.

Marine biologist **Shirley Binder** is Panama's National Director of Environmental Policy and an Edinburgh 2020 Ocean Leader. She has worked on MPAs both in government and within civil society organizations.

Panama has almost 14 percent of its waters under MPAs but needs to change how they are created and implemented by involving and empowering more coastal communities and showing them how the proper creation of MPAs will benefit them economically. This applies around the world. A concept like the rights of the ocean is hard to implement if we can't show how people will benefit. Relating ocean rights to communities and people helps, for example by showing how implementing conservation measures in the High Seas will benefit coastal fishermen affected by the giant fleets fishing the High Seas.

MPA creation or enlargement needs to be based on science and proof it will benefit a community. This is difficult as the benefits take time to appear. In Panama and much of Latin America people in coastal zones are not highly educated so we as the government need to empower and educate them with this information, Ms Binder said.

Before the COVID pandemic, tourism in Panama's MPAs was increasing, and had shown many coastal communities how large protected areas such as Coiba National Park were bringing economic benefits. Many former fishermen are now tour guides, she noted. But this is under the threat from the coronavirus as tourism will not re-start for a while; Panama was in complete lockdown till June 1st.

Panama's environment ministry has given Community-Based Organizations legal status to work together with it on implementing MPAs to reconcile sustainable tourism with protection. If, as in Coiba National Park, the community sees the benefits, they will take care of the protected area. We could have thousands of policemen and park rangers but if the community isn't on board, protected areas won't be effectively implemented.

Ms Binder stresses the importance of connectivity among MPAs of international significance. Panama's Coiba National Park is part of the Eastern Pacific Tropical Corridor, along with Costa Rica's Cocos Island MPA, that of the Galapagos in Ecuador and Malpelo in Colombia. These are core areas, but the migratory routes between them are not as protected.

In recent years science has been studying species' behavior and movement to inform fisheries management and the establishment of more areas of protection, such as Panama's new protected swim way connecting Coiba with Colombia's Malpelo. Panama has started conversations with the government of Colombia to share management, knowledge and best practices. This is important, to avoid reinventing the wheel and reproducing errors other countries may have made in the past.

If Palau does hold the delayed Our Ocean Conference this year, the next one will be in 2021 in Panama, whose economy is based on the ocean and the Panama Canal. It is directly affected by climate change, as new shipping routes open up due to the Arctic melt. Panama successfully pushed for oceans to be included in the texts during the last COP 25, Binder noted; though the language was a little weak it was a first step towards recognition of the oceans as the main climate regulators.

The panel was then opened to discussion. Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity **Elizabeth Mrema** recalled that area-based conservation - including MPAs - has long been a major focus for the parties to the Convention, as the most effective tool for protecting biodiversity, ecological function and services.

Target 11 has been one of the most successful Aichi targets, with more than 17 percent of national waters and roughly 7 percent of global oceans currently designated as protected areas. We still have time to fully achieve the 10 percent quantitative element of Target 11 and of SDG 14 but also the qualitative elements, including ecological representativeness, effectiveness, equitable management, and connectivity, she affirmed.

Now the Parties are negotiating the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to reverse the negative trends in biodiversity loss. This must incorporate ambitious targets and goals for ocean conservation while ensuring oceans can continue to support livelihoods, food security, economic growth and social well-being.

To realize our ambitions for area-based conservation we need to look beyond traditional ways of working and traditional alliances and networks, and engage all stakeholder groups. We hope there will be adequate financial resources and capacity-building support for developing countries, as many are currently unable to effectively implement area-based protection. Paper parks will not change the tide for the ocean, she concluded.

**Harriet Harden-Davies**, a researcher with the Nippon Foundation's Ocean Nexus Program and a 2020 Edinburgh Ocean Leader, leads an international scientific delegation to the UN BBNJ process and had several reflections to share ahead of the fourth and final round of negotiations.

The revised draft text of November 19th reflects astonishing progress - in States aiming to serve as ocean "stewards"; in proposing institutional and funding mechanisms to establish MPAs and conduct environmental impact assessments; and even the contentious issue of marine genetic resources, with a shift from a focus on commercialization to conservation, emphasizing capacity building and technology transfer.

These are key achievements, but several areas call for further discussion and a strong role for science. One is the development of concrete mechanisms for capacity building that can enable equitable participation of all states and incorporate the needs of developing countries. Second is identifying how to share science to overcome the remaining hurdles on marine genetic resources. Thirdly, we must advance knowledge to better understand the role of High Seas MPAs in tackling climate change and associated threats like ocean deoxygenation. Linking natural science and indigenous knowledge is important in that regard, Harden-Davies suggested.

We could also consider novel approaches, such as Rights of Nature laws, to move towards effective conservation of the 2/3rds of the ocean that lies beyond national jurisdiction and ensure equitable outcomes for people. Meetings and intersessional dialogues such as this are critical to maintain momentum, share views, develop proposals and build ambition at this crucial stage in the BBNJ negotiations.

Executive Secretary of the Mediterranean MPA managers' network **Marie Romani** shared a message from MedPAN's President, Purificació Canals, emphasizing the importance of effective management and adequate, sustainable financing of MPAs to ensure meaningful protection. Management means adequate human and material capacity as well as skills, and requires effective operational tools such as MPA manager networks like MedPAN, while the Medfund environmental trust fund is an example of how financing can be secured.

Existing national, sub-regional and regional networks in the Mediterranean and other Regional Seas are successful in gathering MPA managers facing the same challenges. They foster creativity, problem-solving, capacity building and the sharing of resources among MPAs, and enable the necessary linkages between MPA actions at the local level, and decision-making processes related to MPAs at national, regional and International levels.

Acting collectively is needed more than ever to face ocean challenges. In the years to come, building marine communities that connect planners, managers, decision-makers, scientists, civil society, donors and stakeholders – especially small-scale fishers - will be key to working towards healthy, sustainable ocean and coasts, she concluded.

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