

Monaco Blue Initiative 23-24 June 2013 - Moderator conclusions

Tony Haymet – Professor, Scripps Institute of Oceanography

Well ladies and gentlemen, the three of us have been thinking what we can possibly do in ten or fifteen minutes to summarize today's discussions. We're going to take a liberal view of the word summarize. Let me just cast your mind to the session earlier this morning and the keynote talk we heard about the importance of fisheries and moving through to marine protected areas.

I think cautious optimism is the best way to describe what we heard today.

I know it's tempting to be enthusiastic about the news that we can save some fisheries and it is true, there are well documented cases, that the herring fisheries in Scandinavia has come back, and on a smaller scale the Rottne island fishery in Perth and on the coast of Australia has come back, but it's important to say that there are many marine ecosystems that we have never brought back.

I always remember the whale resources in the Derwent Estuary in Hobart in Tasmania, the whales used to be so numerous they kept the people of Hobart town awake at night. Sensible trade people were scared to row their boat across the estuary because they were almost certain to be overturned by a surfacing whale, and those whales were destroyed around 1820 with those gigantic whaling stations that you can still go and see, the piles of whale bones, this was the original carbon resource, our oil before we discovered how to drill into the earth and destroy the planet in another way. Those whales have never come back. I think in my lifetime, there were 3 documented cases of southern right whales putting their noses inside the Derwent Estuary, their former breeding ground, and they seem to have left in a great hurry.

And I think it's fair to say from the scientific side, we don't know what fisheries we can bring back from the grave, and which ones are dead apparently forever, so we should bear that in mind when we hear those wonderful success stories, and some inspiring words from Giuseppe this morning about monk seals that are in desperate trouble, another mammal species whose demise is clearly our responsibility as humans, and yet even there, it's possible to find some glimmers of hope. At least it's possible with strong community support to begin to think about how to restore these marine ecosystems.

So I'm an optimist, so I think cautious optimism rather than benign pessimism is the way to think about our world's fisheries. I do want to underline that we didn't hear enough about some things today. Lisa Speer brought up the issue about ocean acidification today which I think is really a desperate problem for all of us. Our oceans have absorbed more than 90% of the excess heat made from greenhouse gases trapping the excess heat. They've absorbed at least a third of the carbon dioxide that we've produced in making that heat and for a while, it seemed like they would be our salvation. In fact, when my colleagues at Scripps started measuring CO₂ in the atmosphere in 1958, which seems a long time ago, the hope was that not to document our descent into hell, but that the oceans would save us, because the CO₂ would mineralize quickly enough that it would fall to the bottom of the ocean as mineralized salts, and we wouldn't have global warming at all.

Sadly, like many things in chemistry, we could understand the thermodynamics but not the kinetics, and it turns out that the mineralization process does happen but not until 10 000 years which does not help us in the global warming challenge, so we should bear in mind what Lisa mentioned to us today, that we're all operating, we're operating our transport, our optical cable and our fisheries and our tourism and all the other wonderful industries that we use the ocean for in an environment



where we're inexorably destroying it, taking it to a place we know it hasn't been for 55 million years, into a place where today's marine ecosystems have never been and never survived. So there's plenty for us to work on, there's some notes of optimism.

But it's important to realize that we human beings are on a trajectory that's not good for the oceans. On that happy note, let me pass it on to my colleague.

François Simard – Deputy Head and Senior Advisor for Fisheries, IUCN Global Marine and Polar Program

The second panel this afternoon focused on the prospects for exploration and sustainable exploitation of marine resources. The differing points of view led to a very constructive exchange. Fishing has been the focus of our attention as a crucial living marine resource. But it has been going badly, very badly, and we can witness overfishing in the world and the Mediterranean in particular, and this observation has been made by representatives of the fishing world as well as others.

This problem is due to the significant environmental degradation, not necessarily linked to fishing. It may also be related to other causes such as pollution, climate change or ocean acidification, for example in the Arctic where acidification has an even greater impact. This ecosystem transformation we are witnessing is a big problem so we must find ways to adapt to nature and ecosystems and find the correct balance.

In this context, Marine Protected Areas play a fundamental role. Locally with the protection of ecosystems, but also at the global level, the fight against climate change and the long struggle against global change are influenced by MPAs, including in the high seas, where we hope that discussions on the approval of the application of the law of the Sea will go in the right direction on the issue of biodiversity.

We also spoke of the importance of involving all stakeholders in these processes, the protection and ecosystem approaches. In order to understand all the impacts on ecosystems, we must also understand the various activities at sea, their accumulated effects and all the key figures concerned by the governance of the oceans, especially in the Arctic.

We have also noted the importance of the market vis-à-vis of sustainability. The work of the MSC is remarkable and accurately shows that the role of capital market in this field and the role of industry throughout the seafood distribution chain seem quite important for fishing or aquaculture. It is also thanks to all the private sector professionals that we can find the means to be sustainable.

We then addressed the issue of the implementation of ecosystem-based management (EBM) and we clearly identified the complexity of the issue of management implementation, whether for fishing or any other activities, mining, Oil & Gas, various extractions requiring an ecosystem approach. We must understand exactly how these activities impact ecosystems and how we can maintain a balanced and living ecosystem in the midst of these activities.

We cited the rather theoretical example of sustainable fishing, mentioning that current selective fishing methods do not reflect the ecosystem approach we wish for. We also identified the difficulty with implementation at the regional level because of the issue of ecosystems outside of national jurisdiction and of course we know very well that there are different levels of development in the countries of one singular region. This was clearly pointed out in the Mediterranean, where



approaches and opportunities north and south are so different that it is more complex to address this issue ecosystem approach given the great diversity of implicated people in different states.

Illegal fishing, mentioned throughout the day, is an important problem for everyone, making the management of the fishery without real data. Cooperation once again seems the keyword in the fight against illegal fishing, especially in the High Arctic where it would be interesting to see fishing banned as long as there is no joint management plan for fisheries.

Finally, we addressed the issue of aquaculture. If fishing can and should survive sustainably, aquaculture is promised some development. This raises some questions on the problems and issues of aquaculture. There is a need for clear policy development and land use, the need to understand and mitigate the impacts of aquaculture facilities; generally we must improve our knowledge.

The market also has a role to play: an Aquaculture Stewardship Council certificate has now been implemented for aquaculture in the same way as fishing, which is promising. Finally aquaculture also raises the issue of feeding farmed animals on fishery products, so it is essential to find a more sustainable source of protein, notably from the plant world. We briefly mentioned micro algae that could act as feed while capturing CO₂.

In conclusion, we must always push research forward and demand a better understanding of the ecosystem. We need to implement ecosystem-based management so it is particularly important to protect and enforce these ecosystem services. It is a matter of survival for the planet, as Sylvia pointed out with good reason. It is a common heritage which we must protect together. Work sessions, like the Monaco Blue Initiative, are particularly important to exchange and share common ideas for the future.

Sebastian Troeng – Vice President of Conservation International, Marine Program of Conservation

The third and final panel today focused on marine protected areas at the heart of blue growth. It was a very diverse panel with panelists from a wide range of experiences and expertise. It included local governments, representatives from corporations, from industry associations, from NGOs and cross-sectoral partnerships and I'm going to try to very briefly summarize their very rich interventions in five broad points.

Firstly we heard about the concrete benefits from MPAs that are received and appreciated by local fishers, by the tourism sector, especially those involved in diving, but also the cruise ship industry and people with smaller pleasure crafts and some of the benefits that are perhaps less appreciated are things like coastal protection that protect our infrastructure and houses from the impact of storms but nonetheless, they are very important. We heard how these can contribute to the long term costs of management, be it through fees for divers or through more innovative schemes such as payment for the blue carbon that is captured in these MPAs.

We also heard a call for the need to share and to generate more information about the socio-economic effects of MPAs, so that we can communicate that broadly and have more people appreciate all the benefits that these areas can generate.



We had several calls for deliberately engaging all stakeholders in MPA creation from the start even, as it was noted, if it can be tough to overcome some of the sectoral interest and the perceptions about the motivations of other stakeholders. We all like to see ourselves as the good guys but that holds true for all stakeholder groups, and listening is a very important part of that stakeholder engagement process.

There was a point made that we need to draw on the best science to find solutions that ensure true sustainability in terms of how we interact with the oceans. And I thought a very optimistic point was made that MPA creation is really an opportunity to involve multiple sectors of ocean users and those concerned about the oceans to jointly develop innovative solutions to identify and to make real the win-win situations and also to fairly manage and deal with the inevitable tradeoffs that will occur between sectors when we try to protect certain marine areas.

So in conclusion, MPA creation can be an opportunity to get things right and to finally manage the oceans in a way that will allow them to generously provide a range of benefits to people both now and in the future and to secure healthy oceans for our children and grandchildren.

And I don't know about the rest of the participants, but I certainly leave here inspired by the ocean leadership that we learned about from Kiribati to Palau, from Monaco and throughout the Mediterranean and I'm determined to build on these successes through the coming year and beyond and I hope you are too.

Thank you very much.