



RIO+20 POLICY OCEAN GOVERNANCE

23 April 2012

Oceans are critical to sustaining Earth's life support systems. Numerous communities and billions of people are dependent on oceans for livelihoods, food security and economic development. **“Blue” and “green” economies are interdependent.** It is critical to protect and sustainably manage the use of the world's oceans in a way that provides equitable benefits from ocean resources to developing coastal communities and states, in particular Small Island Developing States.

- ▶ Of significant concern is the fact the new Co-Chair Streamlined Text has dropped any mention of an Implementing Agreement in para 80;
- ▶ Overall, the entire section on Oceans has been considerably weakened by the Co-Chair Streamlined Text and previous language needs to be reinstated and strengthened as per WWF's suggestions below.

Paragraph 80: Implementing Agreement

WWF is very concerned that the Implementing Agreement (IA) to UNCLOS has been dropped from the Co-Chairs' Streamlined Text in **para 80**, in spite of strong support from many Parties during the negotiations so far. The IA would address the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Commitment from governments at Rio+20 on this issue is needed to send a strong signal to the UNGA and the global community of the importance of high seas biodiversity conservation. It is important to highlight that the content of IA must be left open at this stage, and give the UN mandated diplomatic conference the role to elaborate on the scope later.

Five Areas of Success for Rio+20

The following **five propositions can help ensure the long-term health of our oceans** and be delivered at Rio+20:

1. **UNCLOS Implementing Agreement (para 80):** Rio+20 should ask the UN General Assembly to convene, as a matter of urgency, a diplomatic conference to deliver a new implementing agreement (IA) to UNCLOS that would address the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
 - ❖ Such an implementing agreement is critical to improve the governance and management of the oceans. **Three areas in particular fall within the current ambit of the IA:** High Seas Marine Protected Area (MPA) declaration; Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) & Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs); and access and benefit sharing for marine

genetic resources. It is important to have a broad mandate so that the scope can be decided later by the diplomatic conference.

- ❖ In order to ensure comprehensive implementation of flag states obligations under UNCLOS and other marine related agreements the IA needs to include **flag state responsibility**.
2. **Land-based activities affecting ocean health (para 81):** Ensuring healthy oceans for current and future generations also requires halting harmful effects from land-based activities on ocean ecosystems.
 - ❖ **Litter and pollution** need addressing from land- as well as sea-based activities.
 - ❖ Litter needs to be addressed through reduced use of **plastics, garbage management, waste recycling**, etc on land. At sea, the **MARPOL Convention Annex V needs to be ratified and implemented** by all flag states.
 3. **Combating ocean acidification (Para 82):** An international observing network for ocean acidification is needed and **states must work collectively to prevent further ocean acidification**.
 - ❖ Pollution **includes CO₂ emissions**, the principal driver of **ocean acidification** which impacts negatively upon marine life reducing biodiversity in the oceans **and poses a threat to food security** especially in coastal and island states. Ocean acidification also compounds the negative effects of other human activities on ecosystem health.
 4. **Global oversight (para 83): States must be held accountable to the international community** for how they exercise their **rights and responsibilities under UNCLOS**.
 - ❖ The UN General Assembly can exercise oversight of state action in EEZs and on the high seas notably by holding **a debate at the UNGA on FAO's biannual State of the World's Fisheries and Aquaculture report (SOFIA)** as well as the reports coming out of the **UN Regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment**.
 5. **Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU) (para 84):** States need to ratify and implement the FAO Port State Measures Agreement.
 - ❖ Getting the **FAO Port State Measures Agreement into force and universal is a necessary component in the fight against IUU fishing**. Since fish must to come to port and get traded, it is more efficient and cost-efficient to focus efforts on suspicious consignments in port rather than on suspicious fishing activity at sea.



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