

11th Monaco Blue Initiative
Workshop # 1 MPAs
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Manuscript
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His Serene Highness, Prince Albert the Second, excellencies, H.E. Ms. Brune Poirson, Minister of State, attached to the Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition of France, Commissioner Sinkevičius, and Mr José Maria Figueres Olsen, distinguished colleagues, dear friends, ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed my honour to participate at the 11th Monaco Blue Initiative and join the panel discussions with distinguished speakers. Please allow me to express my sincere tribute to Prince Albert the Second and the partners for their continuous leadership towards forging international partnership to conserve the marine environment and achieve sustainable ocean. I thank the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and the Oceanographic Institute of Monaco for organizing this important event. The 11th Monaco Blue Initiative bears a distinctive importance this year as due to the COVID-19, the major international conferences on the ocean and global environment have been cancelled or postponed. I deeply regret that the World Ocean Summit planned in Tokyo this March was cancelled and I was not able to welcome you all in Tokyo last March. The 2nd UN Ocean Conference was deferred to the next year. I hope that the extra time given to us will help achieving more meaningful outcomes.

Let me briefly comments on the leadership and the role of science for upscaling the marine protected areas to the proposed level of 30% by 2030. We need to raise the profile of this matter to the highest level of the decision making process. For instance, when Japan hosted the G20 summit in Osaka last year, ocean, IUU fishing control, marine plastic and blue carbon were discussed as priority policy issues. We need to continue to address the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources as a priority policy agenda at the summit meetings attended by the heads of states around the world. We are collaborating with the partners in Saudi Arabia to try to continue high level dialogues on ocean issues at the G20 meeting to be hosted by Saudi Arabia in November this year. We need to keep pushing ocean issues as priority agenda at a series of the summit meetings in order for our leaders to agree upon the ambitious post Aichi Target and to reaffirm the political commitment to adopting a BBNJ agreement.

To support the high level decision-making, I would like to underline the importance of promoting science – policy interface. The precautionary approach will continue to be our guiding principle. At the same time, we need to promote science/evidence based policies. To introduce marine protected areas or area based management tools, we need to have proper assessment on marine biodiversity and ecosystem services, values and risks, and future challenges.

The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development starting from the next year provides a useful platform for us to strengthen inter-disciplinary scientific research and promote international cooperation for capacity development. The standardizing monitoring method is an important task. We need to promote innovation, visualization and information disclosure, multiple use of technologies including satellites data, aerial and underwater drone, supersonic wave and infrared radiation for visualizing ocean and disclosing information.

We should also promote holistic and comprehensive approaches by linking existing schemes and creating synergies by building upon the Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas called EBSAs of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems of FAO and Regional Fishery Management Organizations, and others of the International Seabed Authority, International Maritime Organization, Antarctica and Arctic. High sea MPAs by CCAMLR, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources set a useful exemplar, and for the further review of the additional MPA proposals, the provision of scientific data and its sharing will help creating a framework conducive to optimal decision-making. The platform of the scientific community for promoting scientific research and sharing the data will play a vital role in bringing major stakeholders including China, Russia and others in the constructive discussions. This is also true for the case of establishing the Arctic fishing moratorium in 2017. The international regime for the Arctic that created a basis for scientific assessment enabled Arctic Council members plus Japan, China and South Korea to agree upon the fishing moratorium. Japan, China, and South Korea agreed to support the enhancement of the exchange of information from Arctic expeditions, such as Synoptic Arctic Survey planned in summer 2020. I would also add that we should also relate this with the WTO's negotiation on the discipline for eliminating harmful subsidies to overfishing and IUU fishing.

Last, but not least, our institute, OPRI is engaged in track 1.5 dialogues with the colleagues and partners, hoping to make useful contributions to the high level decision-making and effective policy implementation. We hope to host the Arctic Science Ministerial meeting and the Arctic Circle Japan Forum in Tokyo in 2021 and hope to advance dialogues with major stakeholders for the Arctic. We have had dialogues with our partners of, for instance, China, East Asia, South East, Asia, the Pacific, France, West Asia and Africa to address policies for achieving a sustainable ocean. I am particularly pleased to be with Ambassador Serge Segura of France who was with us in Tokyo in 2018 and in New Caledonia last year for our bilateral policy dialogues. I hope to strengthen and expand such partnership with you all.

Ocean is indeed our commons. As Dr. Elinor Ostrom called for, we need to promote collective actions to manage our ocean commons while adapting our management to socioecological variability and climate change. I hope that the forum like this Monaco Blue Initiative will continue to help exchanging our wisdom and harnessing our partnership toward achieving sustainable ocean.

Thank you.