



# A DISCUSSION ON FISHERIES AFTER AICHI TARGET 6

**BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING IN FISHERIES IN THE  
POST 2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK**

ORGANIZED BY EBCD-IUCN/CEM/FEG-FAO

20/05/2021 - CBD SBSTTA SIDE EVENT



# KEY MESSAGES

- The fishing industry and the conservation sector have **shared goals** and are **complementary** to each other.
- **Sustainable and responsible fisheries** through an **intersectoral approach and reciprocal mainstreaming** offer two possible avenues for cooperation between the fisheries and conservation communities in delivering biodiversity conservation.
- **The area under human use is, and will remain, the area containing the majority of biodiversity** and therefore sustainable use should be a central pillar of the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, as it is within the objectives of the CBD.
- Active **communication, knowledge sharing, and inclusive dialogue** are crucial factors to enable synergies between fisheries and the conservation community in the design and implementation of the Framework.
- Breaking **institutional silos** and the **fragmented approach** to ocean governance remains fundamental to mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries.
- The **fishing industry** (in a broad sense including the small-scale fishery sector) represents the people and the economic sector most **interested to preserve marine resources**. It produces, possesses and to a significant extent, shares the most **up-to-day information** on fish stocks, and already implements **flexible management methods** that could be optimized to achieve conservation objectives.
- An **ecosystem-based approach**, recognizing the social-ecological nature of most Earth's ecosystems, **integrates the social and environmental dimensions** of biodiversity conservation, providing the **holistic framework** needed to address **multi-level and cross-sectoral challenges**.

“The ocean should unite us, rather than dividing us. We must find bridges”  
– Vivienne Solis.

# EVENT REPORT

Sustainable fisheries have a long history within the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). An important example are the **Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (2011-2020), which included a dedicated target, the **Aichi Target 6 on Sustainable Fisheries**. But what is the future of sustainable fisheries **in the context of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and beyond**? This event explored what role fisheries could play within the CBD and how they could best contribute to the sustainable use and conservation of marine biodiversity. Panelists engaged in an informal conversation to exchange their views on crosscutting issues and in an open discussion with the audience.

- **Panelists:** Kim Friedman (FAO); Joseph Appiott (CBD Secretariat); Darius Campbell (NEAFC); Vivienne Solis (CoopeSoliDar); Daniel Steadman (Fauna & Flora International).
- **Moderator:** Ernesto Penas-Lado (IUCN-CEM-FEG)
- **Event recordings:** [available here](#)

## Keynote presentation

In his introduction, **Jake Rice** (IUCN-CEM-FEG) highlighted the value of **Aichi Target 6** on fisheries and progress made. Consensus and premises on the need of an ecosystem-based approach, recovery plans for depleted species and the impact of fisheries on stocks are all crucial elements in this context. While further clarification is need in concepts like “safe ecological limits”, **progress has been consistent**, decisions have been brought together and actions have taken place under one united body, which provides **a framework of accountability**.

- **How to motivate the fishing industry to join the Post-2020 GBF and be an active partner?**

**Inclusiveness and simplicity** in communication were considered crucial factors to encourage further engagement and opportunities for cooperation with the fisheries sector. In this aspect, it is important to acknowledge that some behaviors will inevitably have to change, generating winners and losers.

Therefore, a **participatory, open and honest conversation, which is not only unidirectional, is required** to manage discomfort and guarantee a fair distribution of costs and benefits. **Joseph Appiott** remarked that **silos** prevail in institutional and human nature. There is a need to engage users from multiple sectors to break this fragmented approach.

**Daniel Steadman** mentioned the necessity to transform society's relation with biodiversity, as the **custodial nature of fisheries** should also be acknowledged. Panelists also highlighted that the fisheries sector could contribute to a balance across the three CBD objectives (conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing).

- **How to ensure that environmental administrations engage with the fisheries sector in the work of the CBD?**

Lessons could be learned between spatial conservation management and fisheries management. Yet, institutional silos persist, so efforts should be doubled to deal with misunderstandings, **talk constructively** in decision-making processes, and discuss opportunities and risks of different area-based measures like OECMs and MPAs. Lessons can also be learned from regional seas and fisheries bodies and FAO and UNEP's experience, for example through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue.

**Joseph Appiott** noted that the division between the two communities (fisheries and environmental) is more ideological than factual, as both have similar competences and can **tangibly complement each other if a joint approach is taken**. Efficiency in producing biodiversity benefits is not only about controlling biodiversity degradation, but also about creating opportunities for positive change in already existing activities (i.e. sustainable aquaculture). The need of **reciprocal mainstreaming** was emphasized again, where the conservation community should hold fisheries accountable to their own fisheries commitments.

Some panelists also brought attention to importance of an **ecosystem-based approach**, which would allow for sustainable use of marine resources through a participatory framework that brings together fisherfolks and the conservation community. Under this light, the **Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI)** results particularly important for the CBD. **Vivienne Solis** brought up the example of Costa Rica, where there are in place marine responsible fishing areas, with a shared and participatory management model, and also some national management tools. Both models differ only in the maintenance of the fishing rights by fishermen and women.

- **How to better involve the fisheries sector in area-based conservation measures?**

Area-based conservation measures often overlap with certain area-based fisheries measures. Several **key factors** that will allow to **upgrade existing area-based measures in fisheries** to increase biodiversity protection and effective management were identified:

- Area-based conservation measures ought to follow a **case-specific approach**. Through the definition of **Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs)**, goals specific to the area in question should be studied, and spatial and sectoral measures enforced in accordance.
- While protected areas have been used as a “silver bullet”, **other measures** might result less costly, less politically difficult to implement and all together provide better conservation outcomes, explained **Joseph Appiott**.
- Building on measures already well established and controlled, might be more effective than starting from zero. **Darius Campbell** pointed out that the key question is then **how to enhance and recognize measures currently in place**. Fisheries, for instance, are already subject to very strict monitoring and control measures, which is not the case for conservation measures.
- There is a need to optimize existent fisheries measures and engage in the biodiversity side through a **dialogue** to find the best network (or patchwork) of actions.
- Recognition of **traditional knowledge from indigenous communities** in area-based conservation measures governance remains fundamental.

- **How is equity addressed in area-based conservation measures?**

**A human right-based approach** as well as the recognition of indigenous peoples and other ocean users’ rights whose livelihoods depend on marine resources were emphasized. **Tenure and access rights** were considered as potential ways to measure these aspects. **Daniel Steadman** pointed out that one of the reasons why the current framework has failed to fully address **small-scale fisheries**, was because they are placed in between the conservation and fisheries management mindset and today the delineation between small-scale and industrial fisheries is becoming less rigid.

To further guarantee equity, the CBD **link with other agreements and guidelines for small-scale fisheries** and the need to provide clear criteria within already existent mechanisms were remarked. **Communication** was also considered an enabling factor that allows other actors to be **connected** and **share information** so as to achieve better relations between people and non-human systems.

- **How to integrate an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries in the context of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework?**

COFI has specifically called for the **ecosystem-based approach** to be part of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework but so far it is not included, although the Aichi Target 6 already addressed lots of its elements. **The ecosystem-based approach needs to be strengthened in the framework.**

**Kim Friedman** emphasized that an ecosystem-based approach offers great opportunities as it **integrates environment and social dimensions**. It escapes a utilitarian logic, bringing people and the environment to the same level. While people get benefits from biodiversity, they also suffer also from degradation (i.e. fishers suffer from depleted fisheries). An ecosystem-based approach also brings **a more holistic lens to dealing with issues like climate change and invasive species**.

It is then essential to provide **technical and scientific advice** to the challenge of implementation. The need for **consistency** and to look **beyond geographical limits**, together with a **bottom-up communication** between those that are tasked with implementation on the ground and those tasked with communicating change on a global scale were also mentioned.

- **How to deal with climate change effects in species displacement?**

**Mobile area-based measures** were considered to better match conservation needs and the nature of large pelagic ecosystems under a changing climate. **Darius Campbell** remarked the possibility of achieving effective OECMs in fisheries, through **short cycle regulations** (i.e. subject to evaluation and renewal every 5 years.). In the fisheries sector **flexibility of management**, if trusted, is a strength. This approach can help to address the challenge of stability. The importance of better **synergies** between the **fishing industry and science** in terms of **updated information** was stressed. While science can provide with knowledge and **trust**, the industry owns first-hand information and will detect earlier changes in stocks. Hence, they are essential players that should be brought in the system.

**The food security threat** posed by climate change to coastal communities that rely on displaced species was also acknowledged. Further challenges were also identified in relation to **access to information and knowledge sharing**. Still, **Kim Friedman** pointed out that bridges must be found, creating space for dialogue between different types of knowledge.

- **The role of fisheries in conservation**

**Kim Friedman** observed that there exists a **misperception of all fishermen** as a threat to the environment, whereas they are allies to the Post 2020 Framework as they have a vital interest to protect ecosystems and their function. **Darius Campbell** highlighted the difference between international and national waters, in which fisheries generate revenues that help to enforce conservation measures. Fisheries also provide, as a side effect, scientific information and their presence in the sea is needed to deter potential illegal actions and enforce compliance. Moreover, in some regions like Latin America, where there is no formality, most subsistence fishing would need to be considered “illegal”. A need to change this negative narrative around fisheries was acknowledged by panelists. The **fishing industry** should not be simply regarded as an industry that degrades the environment, but as a **representation of the people most interested in preserving marine resources**.

For more information:

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