

UN-OHRLLS Contribution to Secretary-General's Report on the Oceans and the Law of the Sea

The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA), the Vienna Programme of Action VPoA), and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, are the three internationally agreed programmes of actions for three of groups in groups of countries in special situation, respectively the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. The Istanbul Programme of Action, adopted in 2011, predates the 2012 Rio+20 Conference and its outcome and 'The Future We Want', while Vienna VPoA and the SAMOA Pathway were both adopted in 2014.

SAMOA Pathway

For SIDS, Barbados Programme of the Action on the Sustainable development of SIDS adopted in 1994 and its Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation as well as the SAMOA Pathway all contained specific chapters on oceans, coastal and marine resources¹. Further to these specific and dedicated chapters on oceans, coastal and marine resources, other chapters and paragraphs in all three SIDS programmes of actions also refer to oceans, marine resources and systems throughout these documents.

In relation to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, the SAMOA Pathway the SAMOA Pathway specifically acknowledged that oceans and seas, along with coastal areas are intrinsically linked to sustainable development of SIDS. It also acknowledged that healthy, productive and resilient oceans and coasts are critical for, inter alia, poverty eradication, access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, livelihoods, economic development and essential ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration, and represent an important element of identity and culture for the people of SIDS. The SAMOA Pathway also stated that sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, coastal tourism, the possible use of seabed resources and potential sources of renewable energy are among the main building blocks of a sustainable ocean-based economy in SIDS².

Specific actions that the SAMOA called for that highlighted the economic dimension of oceans to SIDS included: the need to engage in national and regional efforts to sustainably develop the ocean resources of SIDS and generate increasing returns for their peoples³; support for the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries, improved mechanisms for resource assessment and management and enhanced facilities for fisheries workers, as well as initiatives that add

¹ Chapter IV, Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, A/CONF.167/9; Chapter IV of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, A/CONF.207/11, Para, 53 – 58, SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, A/CONF.223/3

² Ibid para.53

³ Ibid para.58(b)

value to outputs from small-scale fisheries, and to enhance access to markets for the products of sustainable small-scale fisheries of SIDS⁴; promoting the conservation, sustainable use and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks, including through measures that benefit SIDS that are adopted by relevant regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements⁵; enhancing the capacity of SIDS to sustainably use their fisheries resources and develop fisheries-related industries, enabling them to maximize benefits from their fisheries resources and ensure that the burden of conservation and management of ocean resources is not disproportionately transferred to SIDS⁶.

On the social dimension, the SAMOA Pathway stressed the crucial role of healthy marine ecosystems, sustainable agriculture, sustainable fisheries and sustainable aquaculture for enhancing food security and access to adequate, safe and nutritious food and in providing for the livelihoods of the people of SIDS⁷.

With regard to the environmental dimension, one key outcome from the SAMOA Pathway also the conservation, by 2020, at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas in SIDS, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and for ecosystem services, through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in order to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss in SIDS marine environment⁸;

With SIDS heavy dependency on the oceans, coasts and marine resources for their economic growth, the SAMOA Pathway also listed the degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems and sea-level rise as a factor in hindering growth in SIDS⁹. The challenge to constantly manage the balance between exploitation and conservation of their vast ocean resources is one that SIDS continues to grapple with. In this connection the importance of development of scientific knowledge capacities in SIDS remains paramount. The SAMOA Pathway In this regard the SAMOA Pathway highlighted the importance of undertaking marine scientific research and develop the associated technological capacity of SIDS, including through the establishment of dedicated regional oceanographic centers and the provision of technical assistance, for the delimitation of their maritime areas and the preparation of submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf¹⁰.

⁴ Ibid para.58(h)

⁵ Ibid para.58(k)

⁶ Ibid para.58(l)

⁷ Ibid para.59

⁸ Ibid para.58(o)

⁹ Ibid Para.26

¹⁰ Ibid para.58(f)

OHRLLS Activities on Oceans - 2014

In line with its advocacy mandate in favor of SIDS, OHRLLS, convened a number of events which included three specifically on oceans and marine resources. On 13 June, 2014, OHRLLS, UNDESA and the World Bank, convened a High Level Dialogue on Advancing Sustainable Development in SIDS, in Washington D.C. Issues discussed included those surrounding World Bank data that 61% of the world's GNP comes from within 100km from coasts, and that tourism is among the top five industries in most SIDS. One of the key messages from the event was that extreme poverty cannot be alleviated without healthy oceans. The Bank also estimated that Pacific SIDS could gain an additional USD250million a year with stronger and more efficient limits on tuna catch.

On 30 and 31 August, 2014, OHRLLS in partnership with the Government of the Independent State of Samoa, and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce, convened SIDS Private Sector Partnership Forum which also focused on the theme oceans and marine resources. The Forum found that SIDS continue to be especially vulnerable to ocean and coastal environmental degradation and require extraordinary partnerships and actions to sustainably manage ocean and maritime resources. SIDS which are committed to marine conservation measures require new partnerships with the private sector including through the provision of cutting-edge technology to support marine conservation efforts and in mapping and monitoring of coastal and ocean spaces. The potential for SIDS to benefit from such technology in the monitoring and surveillance of illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in their vast ocean spaces is of high priority. SIDS partnerships with organisations that set standards for sustainable fisheries, linking SIDS fisheries to international food distributors and the consumption of seafood needs to be further supported and enhanced. Likewise there remains the need for partnerships to allow for SIDS-owned fisheries companies to meet conditions that have been set to attain international sustainable fisheries certification. In this regard the need for enhanced partnerships within SIDS regions to ensure that such conditions are met and sustained is key to the future viability of SIDS-owned fisheries.

Traditional methods of coastal marine conservation in a number of SIDS need to be further strengthened and supported through tangible partnerships. In this light, actions to close Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) to commercial international fisheries interests are an extension of such cultural and traditional practices – albeit at a larger scale. The shift from a dependency on distant water fishing nations which carry out fisheries activities in SIDS EEZs, and the forgoing of associated licensing fees, to an economy that is based on ocean conservation and related tourism are important future considerations for SIDS. SIDS continue to require partnerships with various stakeholders including the private sector to support marine conservation efforts. Concrete private sector announcements made at the Forum during under the

oceans and marine resources rubric included: Google and Palau collective efforts in utilizing technology and mapping ocean spaces to monitor Palau's vast ocean spaces. Google's willingness to use technology and their expertise to expand Sea Vision programme in cooperation with other island countries; The Waitt Foundation collaboration with the National Geographic Society, and Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) on ocean conservation; a call for more collaboration between SIDS to ensure that conditions for Marine Stewardship Council certification are met and sustained in the sustainable use of marine resources; National Geographic Society also called for more 'no-take' zones as a form of marine conservation efforts in which they expressed their commitment to collaborate with SIDS.

LLDCs Vienna POA

The VPOA highlighted the key role that freedom of transit and transit facilities play in the overall development of LLDCs. As such the importance for those countries to have access to and from the sea, in accordance with applicable international law, in order to fully integrate into the global trading system was emphasized in the VPoA¹¹.

LDC Istanbul POA

In the IPOA for LDCs there are a number references to the importance of marine and coastal resources and access to the sea for the economic growth of LDCs. Reference was made to the utilization of tidal energy, among others to increase the capacity for energy generation in LDCs. , sorted by order of appearance. The IPOA also called on the development partners to provide financial and technical assistance and facilitate technology transfer under mutually agreed terms to LDCs efforts to develop and implement national strategies for sustainable use, preservation and protection of the national environmental resources and the sustainable management of marine biodiversity and ecosystems in line with their broader sustainable development strategies¹²;

¹¹ Para.23, A/CONF.225/L.1*

¹² Para.1042(c) A/CONF.219/Rev.1