



Women's Major Group

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Women's Major Group contribution for the Eighth Session of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (OWG8) *Oceans and Seas*

Analysis & key recommendations by the Women's Major Group ¹

The oceans and coastal regions forming part of the oceans ecosystems are rich in resources which provide not only livelihoods for coastal marine communities but also global food sovereignty and food security. The International Programme on the State of the Oceans (IPSO) has called for an urgent halt to ocean degradation² and warns that the cumulative impact of global oceanic warming, sea level rise, and increased levels of deoxygenation caused by coastal nutrient run-off, combine to produce what is described as the ocean's "deadly trio" of threats which will destroy the protective shield the ocean provides against the worst effects of accelerating climate.

The direct relationship between the use, deterioration and reduction of existing natural resources including air, land, water and oceans systems, and the unequal power relations, in which women find themselves in subordinate situations, underscores the importance of addressing the relationship between gender, environmental sustainability and development of the oceans. It also highlights the fact that this is a particularly important avenue for poverty eradication, social justice and human rights.

The Women's Major Group on Sustainable Development and the Post2015 Development Agenda therefore makes the following recommendations on Oceans and Seas to the Eighth Open Working Group on SDGs , followed by suggested indicators and targets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- THAT we reiterate the Women's Major Group unequivocal call for a "stand-alone gender equality goal" in the post 2015 development agenda; and as a cross-cutting sustainable development priority, in recognition that advancement of gender equality and human rights is central to transforming current economic, social, cultural, civic and political conditions
- THAT we support the call by AOSIS, (Association of Small Island States), many individual States and SIDs Interregional meetings and for a stand-alone SDG on Oceans, and inclusion of Oceans as a cross-cutting issue across all other targets and indicators;

¹ This briefing paper was elaborated by members of the Women's Major Group on Sustainable Development, <http://www.womenrio20.org/>. It is based on a more comprehensive report with recommendations for the post-2015 agenda by WMG members:

http://www.womenrio20.org/docs/Womens_priorities_SDG.pdf. For more information, please contact Imogen Ingram, ISAC Inc: imogenpuaingram@gmail.com and Noelene Nabulivou, DIVA for Equality, & DAWN (Assoc): noelenengmail.com

² The International programme on the State of the Oceans is housed at Sommerville College, Oxford University, UK: <http://www.stateoftheocean.org/research.cfm>

- THAT ambitious targets need to be implemented urgently, to reduce all atmospheric pollutants, because they increase greenhouse gas levels, drive up average global temperatures that cause sea level rise and threaten the existence of Small Island Developing States (“SIDS”)³ and low-lying coastal regions.
- THAT, building on the work of the ad hoc working group and before UNGA69, a negotiated decision for a specific, legally-binding regime, which will update and strengthen the UN Convention on Law of the Sea UNCLOS and harmonise with specific SDG targets and indicators leading to coordinated monitoring and enforcement for the full range of threats to ocean sustainability and for global biosphere protection (including in areas beyond national jurisdiction).
- THAT Sustainable Development Goals for Oceans adopt a biosphere-wide approach, which recognizes interdependence and interlinkage of atmospheric, terrestrial and marine ecosystems and that response and recovery plans, backed by significant trust funds, should be a prerequisite to any drilling, mining or extractive industry activities proposed.
- THAT Oceans governance needs to be strengthened by clustering together multilaterally negotiated agreements on oceanic economic activities in accordance with Rio Principles and meaningful implementation of existing multilateral environmental agreements towards urgent global oversight for oceanic economic activities.
- THAT more ocean-focused scientific studies are needed at subregional, regional and global levels, on links between oceans and human health, implemented in partnership with state and NSA development stakeholders.
- THAT implementation is needed of regional and subregional initiatives to promote sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, including achievement of Target 11 of Aichi under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to eliminate harmful and perverse subsidies which distort such management.
- THAT urgent measures are needed (including Means of Implementation, non-loan finances and resources) to assist all communities in SIDS and low-lying coastal communities forced by environmental changes to plan for relocation; to enable those affected to negotiate and implement agreements for peaceful transitions to other lands.
- THAT to counter slow progress and any regressions in the UNFCCC, the SDG processes should lead the way in clarifying and highlighting the scale and urgency of climate change conditions, and setting trends toward ambitious and legally binding climate change commitments
- THAT both developed and developing countries make meaningful reductions in land-based activities that makes up the 80% of ocean pollution from toxic chemical and heavy metal wastes and nuclear contaminants.
- THAT both developed and developing countries must recognize women’s contribution in small-scale fisheries, oceans use and care, and that we must facilitate legal recognition of women workers in this sector. In many national laws, for example, women are not considered artisanal fishermen/fishers, because the definition of this activity usually excludes the pre and post-capture activities in which women are actively involved. In most cases, the role of women in small-scale fishing communities is currently recognised as being in the domestic arena; critical as that is, it needs to be extended. Recognition should be made via credit access, funding for women-led projects, advocacy campaigns, and other means.

³ Small Island Developing States of the Pacific, Caribbean, Indian and Atlantic Oceans

- THAT both developed and developing countries strengthen ocean governance to protect the fisheries on which ocean and coastal communities depend, and to increase safeguards against Illegal, Unreported, Unauthorised Fishing (“IUUF”).
- THAT both developed and developing countries, in accordance with the Rio Principles on precaution, should impose a moratorium on experimental technology that may result in irreversible harm to the oceans.
- THAT we support a moratorium on nuclear weapons processing and nuclear power plant construction.

SUGGESTED TARGETS

Establish baselines, as appropriate, and monitor subsequent changes in:

- a. levels of marine invasive species;**
- b. levels of bleaching and die-off of coral reefs;**
- c. extinction rates of marine flora and fauna**

Increase and measure the numbers of ecologically-sound **aquaculture systems and** marine protected areas, from small-scale through to transboundary.

SUGGESTED INDICATORS

Measure advances in credit access to women in fisheries, funding for women-led projects related to sustainable use of marine resources, as well as advocacy campaigns that strengthen women’s recognition in their work in sustainable fisheries, among other means;

Measure the participation of woman and especially fisherwoman in all relevant fora to discuss global, regional and national actions concerning the conservation of marine ecosystems;

Follow up on the implementation process of the FAO International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries;

Measure **progress on urgent reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG)** emission to the global average temperature increase to achieve below 1.5 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels, and long-term atmospheric GHG concentrations below 350 ppm carbon dioxide equivalent levels;

Measure **levels of ocean acidification** using proven independent, scientific verification measures;

Use proven, independent scientific verification, and community-based programmes, where feasible, to:

- a. Measure **levels of net income earned by SIDS with regard to** fisheries governance, compared to **revenue of distant fishing nations**;
- b. Measure **reduction of overall catch with regard to sustainable fisheries after** transparent and multilateral negotiation with affected SIDS;
- c. Monitor **under-reporting of fishing catch in SIDS through proven, independent, verifiable community-based research methods**;
- d. Measure the extent of pollutants in oceans and seas by **more ocean-focused scientific studies, at subregional, regional and global levels, on links between oceans and human health**, implemented in partnership with state and NSA development stakeholders; such programmes to include **sampling of human hair for uptake of mercury, arsenic, cadmium and other persistent toxic substances** with special focus on SIDS, Indigenous and coastal communities who depend on and fisheries dependent communities.