



The Lisbon Addendum to: From Blue Food for Thought to Blue Food for Action

Welcome outside the box!

By Rémi Parmentier,
with Kelly Rigg

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Participants of the consultation
 processes on innovative approaches on
 ocean protection that led to this paper.
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for environmental and sustainability

The Lisbon Addendum

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Introduction

With the world rapidly changing, and along with it the international order, there is a growing consensus that change is needed in the way we develop and negotiate policy, driven by bold approaches and innovating thinking. This was the motivation for writing “Blue Food for Thought” in 2021. The reception to this paper was generally positive, and a follow-up paper was written to show how the ideas it described could be acted on. The second paper – From Blue Food for Thought to Blue Food for Action – was launched during the Monaco Ocean Week in March 2022.

Inspired by the launch of the paper, 57 stakeholders and ocean advocates subsequently took part in roundtable discussions on innovative approaches to ocean protection.

The Blue Food for Action paper contains a series of innovative ideas for ocean protection, complementing existing on-going efforts:

- Making ocean protection the norm rather than the exception;
- Numerical management of populations of large fish;
- “Disarmament” agreements to stop funding overfishing;



Australian Coastline
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- Treating microplastics like radioactive waste; and
- Establishing regional ocean management organizations.

The series of dialogues was kicked off by a roundtable discussion in Monaco at the time of launch. Five thematic webinars, going into more depth

on each of these proposals, were held between 5 April and 31 May 2022. The objective was to discuss whether any or all of the proposals deserved validation, improvement or adaptation, or conversely to be relegated to the waste bin (fortunately, none were in fact dismissed out of hand).

Proposals in a nutshell

Making ocean protection the norm rather than the exception

As ocean advocates continue to fight a long-term uphill battle for the designation of new Marine Protected Areas (MPA) around the world, let alone the proper management of existing ones, the Blue Food for Action paper suggests exploring an alternative approach that would reverse the burden of proof – *a reverse listing* approach to designate *marine exploitable areas*. In this way, extraction would be the exception rather

than the norm.

Accordingly, those seeking a licence to exploit ocean space and resources – fishing corporations, shipping companies or mining conglomerates – would have to demonstrate to competent authorities that their activities are environmentally safe, causing negligible harm to marine biodiversity and habitats.

This approach could be tested within one or more maritime areas.

For example, in the Mediterranean Sea as part of the Action Plan for an *Exemplary* Mediterranean by 2030 promoted by France and other

coastal countries. Or in the Southern Ocean as a response to the continuing deadlock of MPA proposals under the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). One idea which is proposed would be to call for an Antarctic Life Summit to give the necessary impetus when the wider geopolitical situation permits.

Numerical management of populations of large fish

The paper also suggested that the time has come for large fish fisheries (tuna, swordfish, sharks, marlin, Antarctic toothfish...) to replace the

current system of quotas and catch limits established by weight (tons of fish), with numerical management whereby quotas would be set by number of fish (heads or tails). If properly monitored and controlled (with current technology such as CCTV, sensors, and artificial intelligence), this approach could have considerable conservation benefits:

- Moving away from the consideration of fish as mere commodities;
- More rigorous monitoring of the number of fish caught, hence better estimates of population levels;
- Better enforcement of catch limits (especially for certain tuna species that are caught when they are juvenile, including those to be fattened in ponds); and

- Easier policing of fishing operations and fish trade.

History shows us that it was the adoption of numerical management by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in the mid-1970s, in response to the call for a moratorium on commercial whaling by the 1972 Stockholm Conference, which saved the great whales from extinction.

Many of the large fish are similar in size to dolphins. To understand the absurdity of the current system, just imagine describing incidental catches of dolphins or porpoises in terms of “tonnes of dolphins.”

“Disarmament” agreements to stop funding overfishing

Fishing nations chasing the same fish could consider bilateral and/or regional fleet “disarmament” agreements aimed at decreasing the intensity of their fishing operations on vulnerable fish populations (known as “fish stocks” in conventional fisheries management).

Subsidies Elimination Agreements – SEA SALT analogous to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks between the USA and the USSR during the Cold War – could be a useful complement to the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies adopted by the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World

Trade Organization (WTO) adopted on 17 June 2022 to rationalize fisheries subsidies in accordance to the WTO's mandate under SDG14.6, the sixth target of the Sustainable Development Goal for the Ocean. To enter into force, the WTO Agreement needs to be ratified by 109 of its members, and it reflects at present the lowest common denominator.

To enter into force, the WTO Agreement needs to be ratified by 109 of its members, and it reflects at present the lowest common denominator of the WTO membership. Under these circumstances, additional bilateral and/or regional fleet disarmament-types of agreements among fishing nations chasing the same fish – SEA SALT – would be a welcome addition to reinforce the

sustainability of fisheries and the replenishment of marine life.

Treating microplastics like radioactive waste

Plastic litter decays into micro-plastic particles which enter the food chain and find their way into our bodies – and even our foetuses – with the human health impacts only beginning to be understood. Given the massive quantity of plastics being discharged in the ocean, taking hundreds of years to decompose, they are a ticking time bomb. Moreover, plastics are derived from fossil fuels and have a massive carbon footprint. It is not an exaggeration, therefore, to say that plastic particles are the 21st century equivalent of radioactive waste in the

last century, and that they should be treated as such. During the 1980s and early 90s, management of radioactive waste moved from a “dilute and disperse” paradigm to one in which artificial radionuclides were to be permanently isolated from the biosphere. Plastic litter policy should evolve along the same lines.

It took a campaign of some twenty years to reach a universal consensus on a ban on the dumping of radioactive wastes at sea which is legally-binding on all 87 Parties to the London Convention and all 168 Parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). But there is no reason that it would need to take so long in the case of plastic litter, because – contrary to nuclear and chemical wastes – no-one, even

those who produce them, argues that it is a good idea to dump plastic wastes into the environment.

Establishing Regional Ocean Management Organizations

The establishment of Regional Ocean Management Organizations (ROMOs) to supervise, complement, or substitute Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and other sectoral institutions as well as the Regional Seas Conventions, would allow for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to managing fishing and other industrial activities taking into account of the full range of stressors – including climate change and marine pollution

– on marine ecosystems. This idea has been discussed among ocean advocates in the last twenty years, since the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, or Rio+10, 2002) endorsed the “ecosystem approach” as opposed to single species management.

Ocean governance is essentially sectoral in nature, based around the siloed regulation of industries and activities such as fisheries, shipping, seabed mining or other extractive activities, as well as coastal zone developments. A large number of agreements and institutions are mandated to regulate these sectoral activities, but there is little interplay between them. The mandates of RF-MOs are far too narrow to take entire

marine ecosystem conservation into account, and so are the mandates of other sectoral bodies such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO), tasked with the regulation of shipping, or multilateral agreements regulating the discharge of wastes into the marine environment.

Ocean advocates have been struggling for two decades or more to agree on how to address the fragmentation of ocean governance. For example, a proposal to establish an international panel on ocean change was discussed during the One Ocean Summit convened in February 2022 in Brest, France, and discussions on this and other options continue in the run up to the Lisbon UN Ocean Conference and beyond.

Outcome of stakeholders’ consultations

These proposals – representing outside the box thinking by the paper’s authors – were put to the test by a wider group of ocean advocates and stakeholders during the roundtable discussions. The launch of the paper in Monaco, a hybrid event, was hosted by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation at their Headquarters. Each webinar was introduced by lead author Rémi Parmentier, and by Dona Bertarelli and other partners of the project.

What follows is a summary of key points made during each of the

discussions.

On average, 15 participants took part in each of the roundtable discussions. The notes from the launch in Monaco and of each thematic webinar can be found [here](#).

Monaco roundtable

During the meeting of the Monaco Blue Initiative which took place at the beginning of the Monaco Ocean Week, Secretary **John Kerry**, the US



Attendees to roundtable at the Monaco Ocean Week, March 2022
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Special Envoy for Climate Change, called upon participants to “be bold and to think *out-of-the-box*,” echoing the impetus for blue action. This is exactly what we have done with the Blue Food for Action paper.

As the Swiss philanthropist **Dona Bertarelli** said at the launch of the paper: “There are high hopes with the 30x30 MPA goal, but whether this will be enough remains to be seen. The Blue Food for Action initiative is an encouragement to think bigger, to supplement what is already in motion.”

Marie Romani, Executive Secretary of the MedPAN network, highlighted the need to better connect actors on the ground at local level with the decision-making processes.

She also emphasized the examples of Marine Protected Areas as small areas where protection is the norm rather than the exception and which could inspire a larger scale approach.

Setting the scene during the launch, **Vladimir Ryabinin**, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) said that “even when ideas are too bold, they can have an influence: it is never too bad to dream,” adding that “the idea of treating micro-plastic particles like radioactive substances is interesting, because it requires cutting edge science and innovation (i.e., tracing origin sources of pollution, including plastic), and the discussion on Regional Ocean Management Organizations is also useful.”

Lisa Levin, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, said she strongly supported that plastics merit respect and similar treatment as chemical and radioactive wastes, and she suggested a role for science in detecting plastic occurrence, transport, sources and effects on human health. She said that the creation of Regional Ocean Management Organizations was an idea whose time had come as pressures mount on multiple fronts

Loreley Picourt, Ocean & Climate Platform, said that her organization was ready to put into action the ideas outlined in the paper. **Karen Sack**, Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance, said the paper was “very useful,” but in her opinion it could have been even bolder. And **Tanya**

Brodie Rudolph, from Enviromer (South Africa), said she was inspired by several of the proposals, emphasizing that a reverse listing approach to ocean protection would support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of science-informed strategic corridors, providing opportunities to coordinate across jurisdictional zones.

In this regard, **Professor Françoise Gaill**, CNRS (France) also supported the concept of reversing the burden of proof, “as a new way of taking action by changing the perspective.” She added that the analogy of plastic particles as being comparable to radioactive waste was “also intriguing.” **Geneviève Pons**, Director General, Europe Jacques Delors Institute,

speaking as Co-Chair of Antarctica 2020, said that “as we are looking for new ideas, the idea of reverse listing is a bold idea which can make people reflect. Reverse listing can be useful in the Antarctic treaty negotiations, in the post-war scenario.”

Elizabeth Karan, Pew Charitable Trusts High Seas Project, said she was “captured by the idea of reversing the burden of proof; there is a sense of urgency, and it is not too late; having these discussions is important to understand why a high seas agreement is needed.” Touching upon “the plastics idea,” she said there was also a potential

BBNJ¹ angle to that too through Environmental Impact Assessments: “Treating plastics like radioactive waste can give weight to think about different tools that prevent plastics entering the system.” Lastly, on the idea of Regional Ocean Management Organizations, she said that although there was a reluctance in the BBNJ talks to create new governance bodies (because there will always be competing interests between organizations), “we are always going to fall short of true ambition if there is not an adequate institution or mechanism.” **Jérôme Petit**, from the Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy

1. Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, the treaty on high seas biodiversity conservation and sustainable use currently under negotiation under the auspices of the UN General Assembly.

Programme, thought that the idea of shifting the burden of proof was not only inspiring but also feasible, and he said that the Polynesian concept of *rahui* (*whereby indigenous communities rotate periods of protection in certain parts of their atolls while they extract resources from other parts*) may help.

In her intervention, **Anna Zivian**, the Ocean Conservancy, described the paper as “a breath of fresh air, especially the idea of shifting the burden of proof, drawing on past successes, and also the idea of Regional Ocean Management Organizations” which, she said, could be an opportunity to bring in local voices, to include indigenous peoples and local communities impacted by ex-

tractive activities. Regarding plastics, she reminded that they’re made from fossil fuels which then end up in the atmosphere and enhance climate change.

Markus Reymann, from TB21 Academy, said that coming from the peculiar angle of arts, he appreciated the shift of looking at the challenge and appreciated the escalation of language, because he was “tired of listening to the same words in all the conferences. There is a crisis of imagination, we do not dare to think. This is a starting point: we are addressing challenges that are decades old and need to go further.”

Torsten Thiele, Global Ocean Trust, referred to the Ocean Panel’s proposal for 100% sustainable

ocean plans, and to the Seychelles’ commitment to protect 100% of its seagrass by 2030. He said that financing is needed to bring this tool into action. Regarding Regional Ocean Management Organizations, he said that financial structures are needed to make this happen, and that we need practical knowledge of how numerical management of populations of large fish could be actually done.

Jim Barnes, Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) Founder and Board Chair, saw the paper as “a new and fresh blood flow to move aspirations higher.” With regard to numerical management of large fish, he said that Antarctic toothfish – the main target of Southern Ocean fish-

eries together with krill – should be considered. He also said that Southern Ocean fisheries “are probably all subsidized in one way or another, but that is basically not addressed by the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) so far.” He added that “the proposal in the paper to hold an Antarctic Life Summit raises the question of who goes to CCAMLR and to the Antarctic Treaty negotiations: mainly low and intermediate-level country representatives. Heads of State and Foreign Ministers do not attend, except Prince Albert, who attended a couple of meetings and changed the dynamic for the Ross Sea MPA proposal, making it a priority; raising further the ambi-

tion of senior government officials is therefore crucial.”

Susana Salvador, Executive Secretary, ACCOBAMS², said that “the challenging tone of the report urges for reinforced efforts and concrete actions towards ocean conservation. She said that the suggested reversing of the burden of proof provides “a fresh perspective as to how the international community might wish to tackle emerging and growing concerns on the state of marine environment,” adding that “only a cross-sectoral dialogue involving institutions and the various stakeholders of the ocean, will pave the way

for taking remedial and preventive action.”

Sabine Jessen, Executive Secretary of IMPAC5, the 5th International MPA Congress to be held in Vancouver, Canada in September 2022, said that “at IMPAC5, we are looking for innovative and transformational ideas to help address the urgent issues facing the ocean; the ideas in the Blue Food for Action paper are the kind that will provide for engaging and provocative conversations at the Congress. We invite everyone here to come to Vancouver for IMPAC5 and bring their new ideas to help change the trajectory of the ocean crises.”

2. The Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area.

Thematic webinars

The five successive thematic roundtables were reported under the Chatham House Rule whereby individual statements are not attributed except when someone wants to be on record. Rich online discussions which lasted 90 minutes each took place between 5 April and 31 May. Approximately 15 experts took part in each thematic roundtable.

On Making ocean protection the norm rather than the exception (5 April 2022)

The terms of reference for the discussion were as follows:

- ① Is now the time to discuss and push for the reversal of the burden of proof to make ocean protection the norm rather than the exception? And what could be the first step(s)?
- ② When and where could this new concept be addressed? Which region(s) or marine area(s), fora, organizations, and/or publications? Should a pilot programme be envisaged somewhere?
- ③ How can it complement current initiatives, especially 30x30? Or is there a risk that it undermines them?
- ④ Is it too late to bring this into the current BBNJ discussion in relation to environmental impact assessments?



- ⑤ Could it be otherwise or additionally showcased at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, and/or in the framework of the UN Decade on Ocean Science for sustainable development and/or the UN Framework Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP 15³, and/or IMPAC5 - the international MPA Congress?
- ⑥ Is there appetite to further explore the proposal to promote a high-level Antarctica Life Summit (working title) to resolve the CCAMLR deadlock on MPAs? For example, could we envisage a call by leaders “from the five continents, for the sixth continent” (presumably once

the war in Ukraine is over)?

- ⑦ Any other relevant *out-of-the-box* ideas?

The main takeaways were:

- Reversing the burden of proof can represent a compelling concept in communications for mainstream audiences. It can also nourish experts’ and parties’ conversations on future developments and improvements of relevant international instruments, for example the future BBNJ agreement, the CBD or other regional instruments, such as CCAMLR or certain Regional Seas Conventions.
- The concept of “Marine Exploitable Areas” deserves further consid-

3. On 21 June 2002, it was announced that the CBD COP15 will take place in Montreal (Canada) on 5-17 December 2022.

eration, including in the context of certain scientists' calls for "closing the high seas to fishing."

- Appetite was expressed for calling for a high-level Antarctic Life Summit in order to elevate the conversation on the designation and management of Marine Protected Areas in the Southern Ocean. This would require a targeted high-level policy engagement strategy; initial informal conversations could be envisaged while improvements are awaited in the overall geopolitical landscape liable to affect the ability of Parties to co-operate fully.
- The celebration of the 40th anniversary of UNCLOS in December 2022 could provide an opportunity for consideration of the adaptive capacity of the legal framework.

On Numerical management of populations of large fish (19 April 2022)

The terms of reference were as follows:

- ① Can the numerical management of populations of large fish bring significant benefits?
- ② Are there other and better ideas to consider, instead or in addition?
- ③ Tuna, swordfish, shark, and marlin are mentioned in the paper. Should other species be considered as well, for example Antarctic toothfish?
- ④ Where could this concept be addressed? What could be the first step(s)? Which region(s) or maritime area(s), fora, organizations, and/or publications? Should a pilot

programme be envisaged somewhere?

- ⑤ Could it be showcased at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, and/or in the framework of the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and/or CBD COP15, and/or FAO & RFMOs?
- ⑥ Any other relevant, bold *out-of-the-box* ideas to improve fisheries and management and reduce stress on marine biodiversity?

The main takeaways were:

- A consensus on the need for RFMOs to modernize their approach, in particular by moving away from or beyond the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) paradigm which does not adequately take into account cumulative environmental impacts or the



Co-author Rémi Parmentier with a Bluefin tuna at Tsukji fish market, Tokyo. ©Rémi Parmentier

ecosystem approach.

- However, while *out-of-the-box* thinking and doing things differently is useful, it was recognized that it is also important to define precisely what is meant by numerical management. It goes without saying that management should be quota-dated, based on real data and on the newest models, and numerical management or the management of the number of fish removed is something that needs further detailed discussion.
- Having said that, numerical management for many of the large, pelagic fish could represent significant progress. Atlantic Bigeye tuna and blue sharks in the North Atlantic, swordfish in the Mediterranean and toothfish in the Southern Ocean may

be four species to be considered for a possible pilot programme, via the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and CCAMLR respectively. But consideration must also be given to specimen size before large fish can be taken, given impacts on reproductive rates.

- There is also a need to rethink how information about fishing in the ocean is collected, because there is a huge gap on what is being caught and when, that will not allow us to advance the numerical modelling for the majority of commercialized fish. Since we are thinking *out-of-the-box*, a deeper reform of how much mortality is allowed for different species is necessary. We need a deep reform in global fisheries

catches in general. Monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) is key.

- It is important to take account of the fact that numerical management can be information-intensive, which can be a problem for cases where large numbers are taken by small vessels.
- Emerging genetic tools can help us advance in that form of counting resources, and controlling trade. For example, through genetic methods, it was determined that 70% of sharks on the Hong Kong market come from tropical regions⁴.
- Beyond data collection and monitoring, there is a remaining major issue

of transparency, especially on the high seas, where we must claim the right to know beyond national jurisdiction.

- An in-depth paper collecting and streamlining practical options could be commissioned to a group of scientific and legal practitioners.

On “Disarmament” agreements to stop funding overfishing (10 May 2022)

The Terms of Reference were as follows:

- ① One month before the WTO Ministerial Conference takes place in

4. <https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/dna-detective-work-reveals-where-in-the-ocean-shark-fins-came-from/>

Geneva (12-15 June 2022), what are the chances that WTO Members reach consensus to fulfil their mandate to eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies?

② Are there any last ditch efforts that can be done and if so what are these?

③ Regardless of the outcome of the WTO Ministerial next month, what are the next steps, within and outside the WTO? Including at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, and maybe also at CBD COP15?

④ What are the consequences of the on-going war in Ukraine and the fuel access and inflation crisis?

For messaging before and during the WTO Ministerial, and for the outcome?

⑤ Any other relevant bold *out-of-*



Fisheries subsidies, one of the main items at the WTO Ministerial Conference, June 2022.
©Rémi Parmentier

the-box ideas to secure the implementation of SDG14 Target 6 on fisheries subsidies?

The main takeaways were:

- The discussion was impaired by the fact that the WTO 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) was to take place just one month after this roundtable, with continued uncertainties as to the outcome of the negotiations on the elimination of harmful subsidies.
- Concern was expressed due to the fact that even if the consensus which is required for WTO decisions was reached, a campaign would need to take place to secure the entry into force of the agreement. Ratification by 109 WTO members will be required for the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies adopted on 17

June 2022 to enter into force. It was thus thought that it was important to commit to a campaign for ratification. Lessons from relatively recent ratifications processes that were fast tracked with the help of NGO coalitions and the determination of champion countries should be taken into account (i.e. the Paris Agreement or the Minamata Convention on mercury).

- Looking beyond, and not just within the WTO bubble, support was expressed to the Global Biodiversity Framework currently under negotiations with a view to its adoption by CBD COP15, specifically Target 18 which addressed ending subsidies that are harmful to biodiversity. It was said that the inclusion of a call on the

phasing out of “inefficient fossil fuels subsidies” in the Glasgow Climate Pact adopted by UNFCCC COP26 (November 2021) was also relevant. A systematic identification of subsidies affecting biodiversity would have the merit of allowing the market to respond by adding value to goods which do not rely on harmful subsidies or even facilitate retailers’ and consumers’ choices.

- There was also a suggestion to incorporate the elimination of harmful fisheries subsidies within Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.
- It is important to encourage transparency in cases where fishers are being paid to remove floating plastic from the ocean, in order to avoid the development of hidden fisheries subsidies, even if there is so far no evidence that fishers are being over-compensated for such services.



Marine debris
©Rémi Parmentier

Special Guest: Keith Rockwell

Keith Rockwell, Director for Information and External Affairs and spokesperson of the WTO was invited to update participants on the status of the fisheries subsidies negotiations within his organization, one month before the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) scheduled to take place 12-15 June 2022 in Geneva. He said that when the Ministerial Conference was postponed in November 2021, progress and the momentum began to slip. However, he said that in the last few weeks the mood and direction of the fisheries negotiations had improved notably and that more delegations had started to say that – after over twenty years of talks on fisheries at the WTO – “it’s now or never.” The week starting 16 May 2022 was aimed at closing the remaining issues in the



draft Agreement that was sent to Ministers in November last year, and everyone at the WTO was looking at this as the time to maintain political momentum. However, remaining differences on the text tabled by the President of the Negotiating Group, Ambassador Santiago Wills from Colombia, had continued until the days previous to the start of MC12. 10 MAY 2022⁵

5. Little more than a month later, the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO adopted a package which includes the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

On Treating microplastics like radioactive wastes (17 May 2022)

The Terms of Reference were as follows:

- ① Do you agree that binding obligations should be the primary outcome sought in the plastic negotiations launched by the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA)?
- ② Should the focus be on the elimination of inputs into the environment at the source, or on the elimination of pollution? [The problem with the word “pollution” is that it conveys value judgements, unlike the word “input” which is factual as long as there is transparency.]

- ③ Should we talk of plastics non-proliferation?
- ④ In communications and outreach terms, do you see value in pursuing the radwaste/microplastics analogy, in the context of the plastic convention negotiations and/or elsewhere?
- ⑤ Are there other analogies you would like to explore or are already using? [For example, other banned substances that are toxic, persistent, and liable to bioaccumulate, like heavy metals, pesticides, phenols, etc.]
- ⑥ Any other relevant bold *out-of-the-box* ideas to secure a strong and effective legal regime to prevent the proliferation of microplastics in the ocean?

The main takeaways were as follows:

- All participants agreed that absolute priority must be given to legally-binding obligations, in the negotiations launched by UNEA in March 2022, and in other instruments addressing plastic waste proliferation.
- There was a general sense that it was important to adjust the binding global plastic non-proliferation treaty so that it addresses the full life cycle of plastics, for example with action that stops saturating markets with cheap virgin plastic, a moratorium on all new and expanding plastic production facilities globally; a ban on single-use plastics and scaling up to a re-use economy; and ending the

global waste trade from the Global North to the Global South in order to force governments and companies to address the issue and find solutions to the plastic and microplastics crisis.

- In addition to microplastics, nanoplastics (particles in the nanometre size range) have become an emerging issue of increasing concern that needs to be addressed.
- Everyone expressed “interest” in the radioactive waste analogy, whether as “a campaign/communications approach,” or a policy proposition. With regard to the latter, the tight schedule of 2.5 years for negotiation of the UNEA treaty presents both risks and opportunities. Addressing the “plastics footprint” could also form part of the narrative.

- Implementing the Polluter Pays Principle, taxes on plastic productions, and a moratorium on new plastic products and factories were also discussed, as well as making disclaimers mandatory on short-lived plastic products similar to those accompanying tobacco products.

On Establishing regional ocean management organizations (31 May 2022)

The Terms of Reference were as follows:

- ① Do you think that Regional Ocean Management Organizations (ROMOs) could be a valid option to address the fragmentation of ocean governance?

- ② Do you think ROMOs should be an option to replace [certain] Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), or to supervise them?
- ③ Given the time that it would take to establish a new architecture of ocean governance under the supervision of ROMOs, would it be preferable to envisage ROMOs as some form of watchdog independent from governments which would report periodically in the margins of RFMOs, Regional Seas Conventions meetings and other relevant instruments or fora? If so, which independent organizations could be candidates to lead such an effort, and how should they be approached?

- ④ Could the proposed international panel on ocean sustainability, which will be discussed at the UN Ocean Conference, pursuant to initial conversations held at the One Ocean Summit and the Monaco Ocean Week this year, be fit for this purpose?
 - ⑤ Could one approach be a [pilot] project within one specific region? For example: the Mediterranean, the Southern Ocean, the Arctic, BBNJ, the North Sea or the wider Northeast Atlantic?
 - ⑥ Any other relevant, bold *out-of-the-box* ideas to secure a strong and effective implementation of ocean protection through the ecosystem approach?
- The main takeaways were as follows:
- The discussion on regional ocean

- management requires a combination of transformative thinking both “inside” and “outside the box”.
- Discussion on the need for ROMOs can encourage a pragmatic “revolutionary evolution” of RFMOs as well as Regional Seas Conventions.
 - There were differences of opinion on whether ROMOs should be “independent watchdogs,” or intergovernmental organizations. It was felt that this depends on the mandate, agreed detailed functions and reporting procedures.
 - Discussing the need for ROMOs also provides opportunities to promote the reform of non-transparent and narrow-minded structures which are resisting implementing the ecosystem approach.



Port-Cros National Park France
© MedPAN

- There is a need for transparent accountability frameworks, bringing regional ocean management down to practicalities at the local level.
- ROMOs could have a coordination function in bringing existing ocean organizations and knowledge systems together, bridging science and policy. A test case within one selected region, should be envisaged, for example taking advantage of the French-sponsored 'Exemplary Mediterranean' concept, possibly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Barcelona Convention (2025-2026).

- Lessons should be learned from the CCAMLR experience which originally was conceived as a ROMO but drifted in recent years into a body more akin to a conventional RFMO.
- The BBNJ draft agreement which contains adequate elements to establish high seas MPAs can serve as a model for ocean management at the regional level.
- Networks of stakeholders can help bring the voice of local actors within ROMOs.

Looking ahead

In September 2022, seven years will have passed since the Sustainable Development Goals (including SDG14 on ocean) were endorsed by the UN General Assembly. From this year onward there will be only seven left before 2030. As we are crossing the equator on this journey, the time has certainly come to think the steps we need to take now and after 2030 so that our collective efforts are not in vain. At the same time, we cannot afford to lose another seven years: ocean action needs to be incremented now

We are grateful to all the experts and ocean advocates who have

dedicated their time to participate and in contribute to this process.

This report is an initial invitation to all ocean policy practitioners and ocean advocates to start build that future.

The Blue Food for Action initiative offers an *a la carte* menu of innovative approaches and actions and recommendations summarized in this document. Now, the appetite of the organizations with the capacity to bring some of these ideas to scale and prioritize them needs to be tested, during the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon and beyond.

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