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Report from The Ocean Conference side-event “Can we achieve SDG 14 without looking upstream? Starting at the source to save the sea”

Hosted by: the Government of Sweden, co-presidents of The Ocean Conference, and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM)

Co-organizers: Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Action Platform for Source to Sea Management/ SIWI, the Government of Germany, Swedish Chemicals Agency, Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

Report by: Birgitta Liss Lymer, Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management, SIWI and SwAM.

Objectives and key issues

The objective of the side event was to showcase good practices on the governance and management of resource flows from “source to sea” to achieve SDG 14. The initiatives ranged from the local to the regional scale encompassing broader political and economic perspectives.

The speakers emphasized the importance of working upstream to tackle basic sustainability issues such as access to sanitation and waste water treatment and creating the fundamentals for sustainable development to achieve the targets in goal 14.

A number of potential measures to advance source-to-sea approaches were highlighted:

- Regional political mechanisms such as the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and HELCOM are examples of important platforms for the implementation of SDG 14 at a national and regional level.
- Implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in a way that addresses coastal/marine objectives. This can be supported by including coastal and ocean actors in IWRM mechanisms.
- Increased efforts to influence consumption patterns, cooperation with the private sector and investment in waste and wastewater management systems to advance the circular economy
- Integration of environmental aspects into national development strategies; and development of legal frameworks and sectoral

policies that contribute to a sustainable management of agriculture, forestry, tourism and other economic activities (e.g. the example of Seychelles)

- Setting common minimal standards for waste and wastewater to avoid having low minimal standards as a competitive factor to attract business
- Investment in climate smart agricultural techniques and reforestation (such as the example of Jamaica) and in infrastructure (such as water and sanitation, wastewater treatment and waste disposal)
- Technical innovation (improved materials in tires and roads to reduce the spread of microplastics; filters in washing machines; wastewater treatment that can remove microplastics)
- Voluntary measures such as charging a fee for plastic bags (such as the example of Germany)
- Legislation banning phosphorous in detergents, such as in the EU, and microplastics in cosmetics (proposed by Sweden)
- Regulations for fisheries, jetskis and boat tour operators (such as in Jamaica)
- Diversification of livelihoods towards ecotourism, beekeeping and value-added agriculture to provide improved income for farmers (such as in Jamaica)
- Innovative financing both to implement measures and to compensate stakeholders for losses of income – as an example, the Seychelles work to access funds through both ”debt for nature swaps” and ”blue bonds”
- Formalized coordination between regional seas commissions and upstream mechanisms for river basin management (e.g. Benguela Current Commission / Orange Senqu River Commission and Black Sea Commission / International Commission for the Protection of Danube River)

The importance of cooperation and exchange of experiences, innovation and technology within and between countries, including between industrialized and developing countries were highlighted. Regional mechanisms like the Indian Ocean Commission and Helsinki Commission and global ones like the Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management play important roles in supporting such knowledge exchange.

Summary of discussions



Dr. Jakob Granit, Director General, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) opened the meeting by making reference to the billions of people that still lack access to basic services such as

electricity and wastewater treatment, emphasizing the need to address their needs as a fundamental aspect of addressing the state of the ocean. A common framework is needed to analyze and address the needs for the development and implications for ecosystems that also recognize the connections between land and sea – the flows of water, sediment, pollutants, biota and material and return flows like clean air and migratory fish. We need to find a simplified model to be able to work with these complex issues recognizing political and economic issues at the local, national and regional levels.



Mr. Raj Mohabeer, Officer in Charge, Economic Affairs Department, Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), emphasized the need to address the linkages between upstream activities and pollution and their impacts on oceans collectively. While most measures need to be taken at the national level, regional mechanisms are needed for a collective take. He added that most developing countries are now following the path set by the developed world, i.e.

developing by increasing consumerism. Achieving a sustainable development may come with a high economic cost – how are we going to address that? We need to move forward with concrete actions.



The Swedish Minister for the Environment, H.E. Karolina Skog, said that governance is a key factor when moving forward. We need a strong legal framework – the Marine Strategy Framework Directive is a good example, but we also need governance at the global level – and that needs to be strengthened both from an oceans

and a source-to-sea perspective. In terms of concrete examples, she took the example of HELCOM and the work that started in 1972 by identifying and eliminating hotspots and then moving further upstream. Now we need

to achieve a circular economy and change consumption patterns. She referred to the mutually reinforcing work between HELCOM and the EU, where the work of HELCOM has led to important EU decisions, such as the ban of phosphorous in detergents. Sweden is now pushing a similar stand on micro-plastics in cosmetics - and that should be global. Sweden will invest in the work of addressing land-sea connections through support to the UNEP Clean Seas Campaign, the UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and the Action Platform on Source-to-Sea Management.



The Federal Minister for Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany, H.E. Dr. Barbara Hendricks emphasized that we need to stop using our oceans as dumping grounds. To address marine litter, there are solutions available and we need to make use of them. We also need to involve the consumers to

achieve behavioral changes because “the best waste is the waste never produced”. Consumption is increasing faster than waste management in many countries and that is a gap we need to close. In terms of concrete measures, Germany now charges for plastic bags, a measure introduced voluntarily by the private sector and widely accepted. We need to establish wastewater systems that are functional all over the world. We need to further develop our disposal systems. We need to set common minimum standards to avoid having low minimal standards as a competitive factor to attract business.



The Minister of Environment, Energy & Climate Change at Republic of Seychelles, H.E. Didier Dogley pointed out that there is no place you can understand the context of the connections between land, rivers and seas as small islands. Already in 1960, the Seychelles declared 45 percent of the land as protected area, primarily in the mountains and hills to avoid contaminating its water sources and to keep the scenic views of the island. The characteristics of

small island states also has its difficulties - it is very difficult to manage waste because of the lack of space. Nobody wants a landfill or an incinerator close to their home and the relatively small amounts of waste makes it difficult to put in place recycling schemes. Waste management built upon a circular economy to reduce the amounts of waste is critical. Integrated Water Resources Management, investments in water and sanitation

infrastructure and policies and legal frameworks so that agriculture, development and tourism are done sustainably are also important. The Seychelles has a sustainable development strategy mainstreaming the environment into all activities. The Seychelles has also been working a lot for an inclusive and sustainable Blue Economy. The Seychelles aims to achieve 30 percent protection of its EEZ by 2020 – this will mean a big squeeze on the fishermen so innovative financing is needed. As finance, the Seychelles has managed to do a debt-for-nature swap. The resulting financial resources has been put in a trust fund. In addition, the Seychelles are in the process of attaining USD 50 million in Blue bonds to support fishermen – a new kind of funds where Seychelles would be the first country out. In terms of regional governance, the Minister highlighted the importance of organizations like IOC and the Nairobi Convention to bring people together.



The Honourable Daryl Vaz, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation with responsibility for Land, Environment, Climate Change and Investments, Jamaica, highlighted that the vulnerability of Jamaica's coast in relation to coastal erosion, inundation,

coral bleaching and reduced fish stock has been influenced, to a large extent by urbanization, waste disposal, plastic, agricultural runoff and sediments from eroded hillsides. Actions taken have included collaboration with land owners to achieve more sustainable practices such as climate smart agricultural techniques and reforestation in conjunction with efforts to diversify livelihoods towards ecotourism, beekeeping and value-added agriculture to provide improved income for farmers. Downstream, mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs have been restored, sanctuaries established for sensitive fisheries and regulation has been developed for fisheries, jetskis and boat tour operators. Meanwhile, hard engineering approaches have also been implemented, such as wave attenuation to reduce coastal erosion.

Keynote address and technical reflections



Dr. Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) agreed that a holistic comprehensive approach is the right way to go, but now we need to think about implementation. The GEF has supported several initiatives where several countries share a common challenge and have implemented an

integrated approach to address it, such as in the Danube-Black Sea region, the East Asian Seas and the Mediterranean. An important lesson to draw from those experiences has been that if the upstream activities are not addressed, the positive effects of coastal management measures are limited. A good example for regional governance, include the Benguela Current Commission that has included the upstream Orange-Senqu Commission in the commission so that they can address issues related to agriculture, mining and other upstream pressures together. Going forward, we need to expand the circular economy and work with the private sector to address plastic and broader issues of circular economy. The need to address the connections between upstream pressures and downstream impacts, and break the silos between institutions, will be a central element in GEF-7.

Technical reflections



Carl Gustaf Lundin, Director of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Global Marine and Polar Programme concluded there seems to be three types of problems – the case where all nations have to share problems together, such as in the Baltic; transboundary problems where two countries need to solve a problem together, such as the Canada-US joint commission; and where countries share

similar issues and problems, but there is no need for collaboration to address them because distances are so large, such as in the case of the Indian Ocean. He then turned to issue of micro-plastics, emphasizing we need to tackle the big sources – clothes (where we can put in filters in washing machines), tires (where we need different materials and road surfaces) and city dust. We tackle the big ones, we will need to redesign, substitute materials and reduce use.



Torkil J. Clausen, Chair of the Action Platform for Source to Sea Management, Stockholm International Water Institute emphasized the need to break silos, taking IWRM as an example. Not so many countries are thinking about the ocean when they are implementing IWRM. For that, we need the ocean community to engage in the water community. The Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management brings different organizations together to exchange experiences on what work and what doesn't. There is scope and need for this type of platform that can change the paradigm in thinking.

Emma Nohrén, Swedish Green Party, highlighted the environmental issues that we cannot see, such as eutrophication and pharmaceuticals. It is important to remember that the oceans are a reflection of our lifestyle.

Mr. Raj Mohabeer, Officer in Charge, Economic Affairs Department, Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) concluded by noting that SIDS will, for a long time forward, rely on know-how. Most innovation will happen elsewhere so we need to have a mechanism for the transfer of knowledge and technology.



HRH Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden also attended the event.

A brief summary and more photos from the event can be found at the Earth Negotiations Bulletin at:

<http://enb.iisd.org/oceans/sdg14conference/enbots/8jun.html#event-2>

Annex 1

Summary of the outcomes of the Side Event on the theme "Can we achieve SDG 14 without looking upstream? Starting at the source to save the sea" in Swedish.

Sammanfattning från Sveriges sido-evenemang från Havskonferensen på temat "Can we achieve SDG 14 without looking upstream? Starting at the source to save the sea"

Syftet med sido-evenemanget var att belysa vikten av en samordnad förvaltning från källa till hav för att nå målen i Agenda 2030, särskilt mål 6 och 14 om rent vatten och sanitet samt hållbara hav.

Sidoevenemanget tog avstamp i de utmaningar som hindrar en effektiv och koordinerad förvaltning av flödet från källa till hav. Marina kuststaters förvaltning och möjlighet till försörjning, så kallade blå ekonomier, är beroende av aktiviteter som sker inåt land. De ekologiska, ekonomiska och sociala värdena är därmed beroende av samarbete mellan regioner och länder. Både längs kust och inom land.

Ministrar från Sverige, Tyskland, Seychellerna och Jamaica delade med sig av erfarenheter från sina länder, den verkställande direktören för Global Environment Facility (GEF) delade med sig av erfarenheter från de program GEF finansierar och panelister från IUCN, Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management och Miljöpartiet belyste ytterligare exempel.

Talarna belyste vikten av att arbeta uppströms för att hantera hållbarhetsfrågor, såsom tillgång till sanitet och vattenrening, och av att skapa en grund för hållbar utveckling för att nå delmålen i SDG 14.

Exempel på förvaltningsåtgärder som nämndes inkluderade:

- Regionala politiska mekanismer, som till exempel EU:s havsmiljödirektiv och Helcom är viktiga plattformar för genomförandet av SDG 14 på en nationell och regional nivå
- Implementering av integrerad vattenresursförvaltning på ett sätt som även hanterar målsättningar för kust och hav nedströms. Detta kan stödjas av inkludering av havsaktörer under planering och implementering av vattenförvaltningsåtgärder.
- Ökade insatser för att påverka konsumtionsmönster, samarbete med privata sektorn och investering i vattenrening och avfallshantering för att främja en cirkulär ekonomi
- Integrering av miljö-aspekter i nationella utvecklings-strategier, samt utveckling av juridiskt ramverk och sektor-policy för att stärka hållbar förvaltning av jordbruk, skogsbruk, turism och andra ekonomiska aktiviteter (som på Seychellerna)
- Upprätta gemensamma minimistandarder för avloppsvatten och avfall för att undvika möjligheten att ha en låg minimistandard som en konkurrensfördel

- Investering i klimatsmarta jordbrukstekniker och återplantering av skog (som på Jamaica) och i infrastruktur (som t ex vatten och sanitet, avlopps- och avfallshantering).
- Teknisk innovation (förbättrade material i däck och vägar för att minska spridning av mikroplaster, filter i tvättmaskiner, avloppsrening som kan fånga upp mikroplaster)
- Frivilliga åtgärder som att ta ut avgifter för plastpåsar (som i Tyskland)
- Lagstiftning såsom förbud mot fosfor i tvättmedel (som i EU) och mot mikroplast i kosmetika (förslag från Sverige)
- Regelverk för fiske, jetskis och researrangörer (båtar och liknande) (som på Jamaica)
- Åtgärder för att diversifiera försörjningsmöjligheter genom till exempel ekoturism, förädlingsjordbruk och biodling (som på Jamaica)
- Innovativ finansiering dels för att finansiera åtgärder och dels för att kompensera intressenter och yrkesgrupper som förlorar ekonomiskt på dessa – Seychellerna arbetar för att få tillgång till medel genom dels ”debt for nature swaps” och dels ”blue bonds”.
- Formaliserad koordinering mellan regionala havskommissioner och uppströms mekanismer för förvaltning av avrinningsområden (e.g. Benguela Current Commission / Orange Senqu River Commission och Black Sea Commission / International Commission for the Protection of Danube River)

Vikten av samarbete och utbyte av erfarenheter, innovation och teknik inom och mellan länder belystes. Regionala mekanismer såsom Indian Ocean Commission, HELCOM och Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management är viktiga för att stödja sådant kunskapsutbyte.

Annex 2

Agenda/ Program

When: Thursday June 8, 1:15 pm-2:30 pm

Event chair and moderator: Dr. Jakob Granit, SwAM

Block 1: Opening remarks (10 min) 1:15-1:25 pm

Setting the scene: Dr. Jakob Granit, Director General, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM)

Welcome address: Mr. Raj Mohabeer, Officer in Charge, Economic Affairs Department, Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)

Block 2: Keynote Speakers, (40 min) 1:25-2:05 pm

Moderator introduces block 2

1. Keynote: Swedish Minister for the Environment, H.E. Karolina Skog
Source-to-sea priorities in the Baltic and the North Sea and the links to regional economic cooperation and development (e.g. EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region, HELCOM and OSPAR cooperation)

2. Keynote: Federal Minister for Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany, H.E. Dr. Barbara Hendricks
Marine Litter, Nutrients, toxic pollutants: tackling land based pollution at the source – experiences from Germany.

3. Keynote: Minister of Environment, Energy & Climate Change at Republic of Seychelles, H.E. Didier Dogley
Experiences from a Small Island Developing State in addressing source-to-sea priorities in the broader regional economic collaborative perspective of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)

4. Keynote: Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation with responsibility for Land, Environment, Climate Change and Investments, Jamaica, The Honourable Daryl Vaz
Experiences from Jamaica in identifying and addressing source to sea priorities.

Moderator summarizes block 2

Block 3: Keynote address, technical reflections and discussion (25 min) 2:05 – 2:30 pm

Moderator introduce block 3

Keynote address: Dr. Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson for the Global

Environment Facility (GEF)

GEF Integrated approaches -Investments that address Source-to-sea priorities and ocean governance supporting the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Technical reflections

Panel members:

Each panelist will be given 2-3 minutes to comment and reflect on the keynote speeches delivered by the ministers and GEF CEO.

1. Carl Gustaf Lundin, Director of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Global Marine and Polar Programme
2. Torkil Jonch Clausen, Chair of the Action Platform on Source to Sea Management
3. Emma Nohrén, Swedish Green Party

Discussion led by moderator

Example of questions for discussion:

- How can the international community support source-to-sea efforts supporting sustainable economic growth reaching SDG 14?
- How can regional cooperation be built and sustained to successfully achieve coordinated management from source-to-sea?
- What type of institutions are needed at the national level to achieve a sustainable blue economy addressing key flows in the continuum from source-to-sea?

Concluding remarks, moderator