

IMPAC5 Recognizes Role of Other Area-based Measures in Protecting Ocean

8 February 2023

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STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- IMPAC5 participants considered resources for identifying, recognizing, evaluating, and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures.
- Among other topics, they focused on Indigenous approaches to marine and coastal conservation, including perspectives from Canada, Mexico, and the US.

Participants at the fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) welcomed other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) as a tool for establishing conservation structures alongside marine protected areas (MPAs) that empower Indigenous leadership and governance. They reflected on the interconnectivity of the planet and on people's relationship with its "life support system" – the Ocean.

Daniel Pauly, Sea Around Us, stated that if high seas MPAs are not rolled out, the '30 by 30' target will be very difficult to achieve, warning against "the target being reached on paper only."

In a dedicated OECMs session, Amber Himes-Cornell, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), presented FAO's handbook for identifying, evaluating, and reporting OECMs in marine fisheries. She said "some fisheries' area-based conservation measures may qualify as an OECM if they have long-term biodiversity outcomes."

Jessica Mitchell, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, presented Canada's 2022 guidance for recognizing marine OECMs. She said federal marine OECM elements include international definitions, ten guiding principles, and the assessment of criteria, including spatially defined areas.

While participants recognized OECMs' value, the [Earth Negotiations Bulletin \(ENB\)](#) notes that one participant described them as "other extremely complicated measures," suggesting the process may not be straightforward.

Other [day three](#) sessions focused on, among other topics:

- Managing human impacts in MPAs;
- Conservation of biodiversity;

- › Engaging MPAs to protect whales for biodiversity conservation and climate change solutions;
- › Community-based governance and conservation of coral reefs; and
- › Indigenous approaches to marine and coastal conservation, including perspectives from Canada, Mexico, and the US.

[Day four](#) of the Congress opened with a call from Cécile Tang, IMPAC5 Young Professional Committee, to harness “eco-distress” for “a deeper sense of purpose.”

Asha de Vos, Oceanswell, said “every coastline needs a local hero if we want to save the Ocean.”

Dalee Sambo Dorough, University of Alaska Anchorage, highlighted the importance of finding ways for co-producing knowledge through creative and culturally appropriate methodologies and ethical and equitable processes, while recognizing Indigenous rights to self-determination, to overcome the flawed system of “parachuting” and colonial science.

Participants considered, *inter alia*:

- › Impacts of climate change on MPAs;
- › Decolonizing environmental NGO advocacy work for marine conservation and MPAs;
- › Tech-based conservation solutions; and
- › Community and indigenous leadership as core to large-scale ocean management.

Jointly hosted by the Host First Nations – xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam Indian Band), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish Nation), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-waututh Nation) – together with the Province of British Columbia, the Government of Canada, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), IMPAC5 runs through 9 February. The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* (ENB) is [providing daily coverage](#) of selected sessions. [[IMPAC5 Website](#)]

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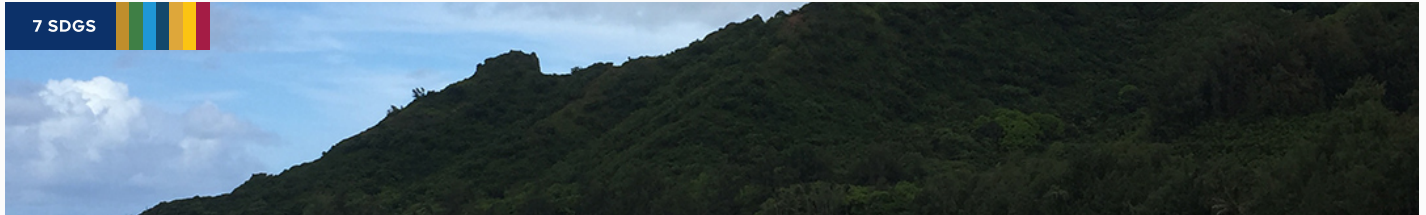
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