



## **High Seas Alliance and Deep Sea Conservation Coalition Input to the report to the September 2013 General Assembly Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda.**

This Input proposes a standalone SDG for the oceans in response to the growing importance that the international community is attaching to oceans issues and the particular environmental and management issues that warrant a shared approach .

The [High Seas Alliance](#) represents 27 non-governmental organizations plus the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The objective of the Alliance is to facilitate international cooperation to establish high seas protected areas and to strengthen high seas governance.

The [Deep Sea Conservation Coalition](#) (DSCC) represents over 70 organisations worldwide working together under the umbrella of the DSCC to protect cold-water corals and vulnerable deep-sea ecosystems.

Goal 5 of the High Level Panel report was to “Goal 9: Ensure Food Security and Good Nutrition.” With target (d) adopt sustainable agricultural, ocean, and freshwater fishery practices and rebuild designated fish stocks to sustainable levels.

The [HLP](#) noted that “We cannot forget the world’s oceans. Poor management of the oceans can have particularly adverse impacts for Small Island Developing States. Reducing wastewater in coastal areas, as outlined the illustrative goal on water and sanitation, will help. But overfishing is another problem, reducing an important source of protein for billions of people. Three-quarters of the world’s fish stocks are being harvested faster than they can reproduce and 8-25 per cent of global catch is discarded. This degradation and waste creates a cycle which depletes necessary fish stocks to unsustainable levels. It also harms the ocean’s biosystems. We can and must correct this misuse; properly managing fish stocks gives fish enough time to reproduce and ensure sustainable fisheries. Currently, 30 per cent of fish that are harvested are overfished, while 12.7 per cent have greater capacity and could be fished more before reaching their natural limit.” (note. FAO: The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2012.)

A related goal was “Goal 9: Manage natural resource assets sustainably” With target (c) Safeguard ecosystems, species and genetic diversity. The Panel noted that:” Ecosystems include forests, wetlands and oceans.” Yet the remainder of the note only concerned forests. But the Panel did note later that “Without environmental sustainability, we cannot end poverty; the poor are too deeply affected by natural disasters and too dependent on deteriorating oceans, forests and soils.”

The Panel is right to observe that ecosystems include the oceans, and that fish stocks must be managed sustainably. But overfishing and unsustainable fishing is only one of a number of issues critical to sustainable development that the oceans face. As Visbeck et al noted,<sup>1</sup> quite simply, ocean services are essential for human life on earth. The oceans regulate the global and regional climate system, the hydrological cycle, and the circulation of nutrients, heat and other key substances and processes. They balance temperature distribution, influence precipitation, deliver oxygen to the air, and absorb carbon dioxide, also supporting mitigation of climate change.

The world at Rio+20 recognized the critical role of oceans in sustainable development. In an important paragraph,<sup>2</sup> the *Future We Want* observed that:

“158. We recognize that oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth’s ecosystem and are critical to sustaining it and that international law, as reflected in United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), provides the legal framework for the conservation and the sustainable use of the oceans and their resources. We stress the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources for sustainable development, including through the contributions to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, food security, creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work, while at the same time protecting biodiversity and the marine environment and addressing the impacts of climate change. We therefore commit to protect, and restore, the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, and to maintain their biodiversity, enabling their conservation and sustainable use for present and future generations, and to effectively apply an ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach in the management, in accordance with international law, of activities impacting on the marine environment, to deliver on all three dimensions of sustainable development.”

We reiterate: ocean services are essential for human life on earth, and the ecosystem services are critical to sustainable development. For these reasons, the High Seas Alliance believes it is essential to have a standalone Sustainable Development Goal for the Oceans.

[*The Future We Want* in paragraph 168 ?]

The High Seas Alliance therefore proposes the following SDG, which builds on paragraph 158, and adds commitments from paragraph 168 and CBD Aichi Target 11, which is reaffirmed in paragraph 177 of *The Future We Want and commitments set out in various paragraphs of UNGA Oceans and Fisheries Resolution*.

### ***Proposed Sustainable Development Goal***

## **Ensure healthy oceans**

- a. Protect and restore the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems and maintain ocean biodiversity, enabling the conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity they support.**

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Visbeck , Ulrike Kronfeld-Goharani , Barbara Neumann , Wilfried Rickels , Jörn Schmidt , Erik van Doorn Establishing a Sustainable Development Goal for Oceans and Coasts to Face the Challenges for Our Future Ocean. May 24, 2013. At [https://www.google.co.nz/search?q=a-&rlz=1C1CHMO\\_en-gbNZ495NZ495&oq=a-&aqs=chrome.0.69i57.119883j0&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.co.nz/search?q=a-&rlz=1C1CHMO_en-gbNZ495NZ495&oq=a-&aqs=chrome.0.69i57.119883j0&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8).

<sup>2</sup> *The Future We Want*, para. 158.

- b. Effectively implement integrated ecosystem based management, including application of the precautionary approach, in the management of all activities impacting on the marine environment.**
- c. Develop, adopt and implement science based fisheries management plans that are sustainable and limit fishing catch and effort to sustainable levels commensurate with the status of the stocks and their ecological role and social value, rebuild stocks where depleted, and reduce to sustainable levels bycatch, discards, and other adverse ecosystem impacts from fisheries, eliminate destructive fishing practices and protect vulnerable marine ecosystems.**
- d. Conserve, by 2020, 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas;**
- e. establish an effective vessel control regime to ensure that any management measures can be effectively complied with and ensure that all vessels are safe working platforms for all seafarers, including fishers, and that the impacts of all maritime uses are transparently assessed and effectively minimised;**
- f. ensure that those responsible for land-based sources of marine pollution are fully aware of the impacts of such pollution, especially from coastal development, from waste plastics and from acidification, and appropriate minimisation strategies are developed, and achieve significant reductions in marine debris to prevent harm to the coastal and marine environment.**