

The Yeosu Declaration, the Yeosu Declaration Forum and the Yeosu Project: We Look to the Oceans as a New Engine for Green Growth

by Dosoo Jang



Yeosu Declaration Roundtable Discussion participants.

Background

The International Exposition Yeosu Korea 2012 (Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea) is a monumental event for the global ocean community, focusing on “The Living Ocean and Coast” which drew more than 8.2 million people over the course of 93 days. In the spirit of progress and innovation, as reflected in the exhibitions of the Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea, the Yeosu Declaration and the Yeosu Declaration Forum sought to catalyze international action in pursuit of the new vision of “*green growth from the sea*”, which looks to the ocean as a new engine of sustainable economic growth, while keeping the ocean healthy and ensuring harmony of the sea and humankind.

The Yeosu Declaration

The Yeosu Declaration builds on the efforts of the Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea, as well as the international framework for the ocean and the outcomes of major conferences on sustainable development. It recognizes the ocean as a critical part of the Earth’s life supporting system and a valuable source of food, livelihood, and culture to billions around the world. Marine ecosystem services and a rich diversity of marine resources are essential to human survival, civilization, and prosperity. This is especially important in light of the growing global population and the many pressures facing the ocean.

The Declaration aims to elevate ocean issues to the top of the global policy agenda and empower all stakeholders to

have greater stewardship and take up their unique roles in ensuring the well-being of the ocean for future generations. It seeks to mobilize the global community in all sectors, including governments, civil society, and the private sector, to support the ocean as an important source of prosperity and development, strengthening social and economic linkages of the global community.

The Declaration also intends to catalyze tangible action for the protection of marine ecosystems and the use of innovative and environmentally-friendly technologies to realize the many opportunities of the ocean. It supports an improved understanding of the ocean through science and observation in order to better manage ocean resources and more effectively respond to major threats and natural disasters.

As the well-being of the entire world is inextricably connected to the ocean, the Yeosu Declaration emphasizes the importance of collaborative international action, involving all nations. In this respect, the Declaration highlights the importance of assisting developing nations, including small island developing states, to better manage their marine resources and address ocean-related challenges.

The Declaration also highlights the Yeosu Project, as a legacy of the Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea, which focuses on building the capacity of developing nations, and calls for translating the spirit of the Declaration into action. The text of the Declaration is posted at <http://eng.expo2012.kr/is/ps/unitybbs/bbs/selectBbsDetail.html?ispsBbsId=BBS001&ispsNttId=0000060031>.

The Yeosu Declaration Forum and Roundtable

The Yeosu Declaration Forum and Roundtable outlined the vision of the ocean as a new engine of sustainable economic growth, combined with sustainable management and stewardship of ocean resources. These two events provided a key opportunity to build on the political momentum of Rio+20, with the heightened awareness of the general public on oceans illustrated by the more than 8 million Expo visitors.



Presentations at the Yeosu Declaration Forum by UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon (top), Prime Minister of Korea, Hwang-sik Kim (middle) and Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Willy Telavi (bottom), August 12, 2012.

Throughout the discussions at the Forum and Roundtable, many innovative and forward-looking ideas emerged for mobilizing various stakeholders in the ocean community to implement the Yeosu Declaration and to advance a new paradigm of “green growth from the sea”. Global ocean leaders highlighted the Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea and Declaration as signaling a change in our relationship with the ocean, shifting from unsustainable resource-use and

ecosystem degradation to a society that utilizes new opportunities of the ocean, driving sustainable economies, while reducing impacts on the marine environment and ensuring that ecosystems remain healthy and productive.

The main points and actionable items that emerged in the day’s discussions can be organized into three main thematic areas: (1) Green growth from the sea to support the ocean as a new engine of sustainable economic growth; (2) Supporting ocean stewardship throughout the global community; and (3) Supporting developing countries in achieving green growth from the sea:

1. Green Growth from the Sea

Equity and Transparency

- Ensure that the principles of equity and transparency are central in the transition to green growth from the sea.

Science and Technology

- Develop new technological approaches to shift towards more sustainable practices in both new and traditional uses of the ocean;
- Increase investment and policy support for new technologies to ensure that new and emerging opportunities in the ocean can be explored while mitigating impacts on the marine environment, and reducing the costs of technologies and making them accessible to all nations;
- Develop viable policy and regulatory frameworks, underpinned by sound data and research, for new and emerging technologies.

Ocean Observation and Data to Support Improved Management

- Expand and support comprehensive and sustained observation and monitoring of the marine environment as contributions to the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), including through increased institutional capacity and funding;
- Support developing countries, through technology transfer and other types of capacity development, in observing and monitoring the marine environment, and foster data exchange across nations and the international community;
- Support the role of the private sector in ocean observation and monitoring;
- Support the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects (Regular Process) and other types of reporting mechanisms to strengthen the science-policy interface;
- Improve the consistency in the type of the data collected on natural and non-natural science areas to support effective and coherent policy development for ocean management;
- Improve understanding of, and methodologies to analyze the value of, both the market and non-market values of the ocean.

Fisheries and Aquaculture

- Phase out harmful subsidies that drive overexploitation and harmful practices and support subsidies that encourage sustainable use and environmentally-friendly practices;
- Support coastal fishing communities in taking up sustainable practices or switching to alternative livelihoods;
- Sustainably expand aquaculture to meet the food demands of the rising global population.

Integrated Governance

- Develop synergistic approaches to the use of ocean resources and space to reduce user conflicts, costs, and cumulative impacts;
- Improve integrated ocean governance at the national level through the strengthening of integrated institutions and decision-making processes for the coast and ocean;
- Accelerate the development and implementation of integrated ocean governance in regional and transboundary areas, encouraging the adoption of regional protocols on integrated ocean governance to guide action at regional and national levels;
- Move toward ecosystem-based management of areas beyond national jurisdiction to address multiple use conflicts, manage new uses, and protect vulnerable ecosystems and marine biodiversity;
- Implement the integrated approach at the UN level, supporting the UN Secretary General's Oceans Compact, to enable a crosscutting approach and appropriate and timely response to major threats and opportunities related to the ocean;
- Build upon and expand the use of marine spatial planning (MSP) in different areas, relying on useful guidelines that have been put forth, including the IOC/UNESCO MSP guidelines;
- Improve governance, including through partnerships and sharing experiences, to improve the health and productivity of marine ecosystems and shore up much needed financing for coastal communities.

Climate Change

- Integrate the use of both new scientific information and local knowledge in devising solutions to climate change;
- Protect and preserve ocean and coastal ecosystems to support climate change mitigation, ecosystem-based climate change adaptation, and the long-term well-being and productivity of marine ecosystems;
- Explore new and innovative options to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, such as storage of CO₂ in phytoplankton via bioreactors;
- Build upon and coordinate ongoing efforts for ecosystem-based climate change adaptation in coastal and ocean areas, including through the utilization of existing funds for climate change adaptation (e.g., GEF Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund).



Participants of the Yeosu Declaration Roundtable (top to bottom): Arni Mathiesen (Assistant Director General, FAO), Patricio Bernal (Project Coordinator, IUCN), Biliana Cicin-Sain (President, GOF) and Alexander Bychkov (Executive Secretary, PICES).

2. Supporting Ocean Stewardship throughout the Global Community

- Better engage governments, especially at the local level, to build their understanding of the value and range of services provided by the ocean and capacitate them to effectively implement policies in support of “green growth from the sea”;
- Support collaboration among scientists, policy experts, and decision-makers to strengthen the science-policy interface, and develop and implement policies for “green growth from the sea”;
- Foster “ocean champions” by engaging high-level and high profile policy-makers on the importance of the ocean and the need to take urgent action;
- Expand public education and outreach, including ocean literacy, ocean education, social media, and other tools, to empower the public to make behavioral changes and push policymakers and resource managers to responsibly manage ocean resources;
- Engage youth at an early age, through better integration of ocean literacy in curriculum, to cultivate tomorrow’s ocean leaders;
- Provide increased support to schools and organizations undertaking education and outreach efforts;
- Encourage and support ocean stewardship in various industries and commercial activities, including through guidelines for sustainable practices and public-private partnerships;
- Support collaboration among governments, the private sector, scientists, and environmental interests to ensure that robust and efficient regulatory frameworks are in place for new and emerging activities;
- Support eco-labeling (which indicates if a product has been produced in an environmentally-friendly manner which has been proven to be relatively effective in assisting consumers in supporting responsible companies).

3. Supporting Developing Countries in Achieving Green Growth from the Sea

- Enhance the capacity of developing countries, including Small Islands Developing States, to effectively manage and sustainably benefit from their ocean resources, and to cope with major ocean-related challenges, including climate change, using the full range of capacity development (financing, training, technology transfer, knowledge sharing, and institutional development);
- Develop a more strategic approach to ocean-related capacity development to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of capacity efforts;
- Link capacity efforts in various forms to leverage resources and catalyze further capacity support;
- Use official development assistance (ODA), including allocating a certain percentage of ODA to science and technology development;
- Encourage North-South and South-South collaboration in ocean-related capacity development;
- Utilize the political and financial power and intellectual capacity of urban areas in capacity development.

The Yeosu Project

The Yeosu Project is an international cooperation program designed to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in meeting the challenges related to the ocean and the environment. The Project is intended to be the practical element that translates the spirit of the Yeosu Declaration and the theme of Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea into action.

A total of ten billion won (approximately ten million US dollars) is being invested in projects as a pilot program by the Korean government from 2009 through 2012 to assist coastal and island communities in coping with ocean-related challenges.



Participants of the Yeosu Declaration Roundtable (left to right): Zhanhai Zhang (Director General, International Cooperation Department, SOA), Susan Avery (President, WHOI) and Jacqueline Alder (Coordinator, UNEP).

The focal areas of support were identified as follows:

- *Improvement of the marine environment:* management and conservation of marine resources, response to marine pollution, marine environment exploration, marine safety measures;
- *Development of new marine technologies:* practical use of fisheries resources, development of marine biological resources, utilization of marine mineral resources;
- *Conservation and utilization of marine resources:* conservation of fisheries resources.

For the implementation of the pilot stage of the Yeosu Project, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) was designated as the execution agency. The following projects were launched:

- *First-Year (2009):* 12 assignments in 7 countries including Fiji, Indonesia, Tuvalu, and Vietnam;
- *Second-Year (2010):* 3 assignments in Grenada, Sri Lanka, and Tanzania;
- *Third-Year (2011):* 6 assignments with 6 international and intergovernmental organizations such as FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), IMO (International Maritime Organization), IOC (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO), PEMSEA (Partnership in Environmental

Management for the Seas of East Asia), COBSEA (Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia), and WCPFC (Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission).

The results of the pilot stage are being evaluated, and the design for the next stage is in progress. In 2012, after the Yeosu Expo was successfully completed, the Korean government made a decision to advance the three-year pilot stage of the Yeosu Project for the main program in the near future in an effort to raise, if successful, a total of one hundred billion won (approximately one hundred million US dollars) as a seed fund.

Ensuring the legacy of the Yeosu Declaration

The Yeosu Declaration represents an important milestone in articulating the collective recognition of the global community on the importance of the ocean to our survival, development, and prosperity. It notably voices the concerns of the global community on the pressing threats facing the oceans, and also signals a new paradigm where the ocean is more than just a resource base. We look to the ocean as a source of opportunity that, if utilized responsibly, will yield limitless possibilities for humankind.



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2013 PICES Calendar

- International Symposium on “[*Climate variability and change on marine resources and fisheries: Toward a South Pacific Integrated Ecosystem Studies Program \(SPICES\)*](#)”, January 7–10, 2013, Concepción, Chile (co-sponsored by PICES);
- IMBER IMBIZO III on “[*The future of marine biogeochemistry, ecosystems and societies: Multi-dimensional approaches to the challenges of global change in continental margins and open ocean systems*](#)”, January 28–31, 2013, Goa, India (co-sponsored by PICES);
- [*4th International Jellyfish Bloom Symposium*](#), June 5–7, 2013, Hiroshima, Japan (co-sponsored by PICES);
- CLIVAR/PICES Theme Session on “*Biophysical interactions*” at the 2nd international Symposium on “*Boundary Current dynamics: Its connection with open-ocean, coastal processes, biophysical interactions and responses to global climate change*”, July 8–13, 2013, Lijiang, China;
- PICES Summer School on “*Ocean observing systems and ecosystem monitoring*”, August 19–23, 2013, Hatfield Marine Science Center, Newport, U.S.A.;
- 8th International Conference on Marine Bioinvasions, August 20–22, 2013, Vancouver, Canada (co-sponsored by PICES)
- Workshop on “*Development and application of Regional Climate Models-II*”, September 2013, Busan, Korea;
- [*6th SOLAS Summer School*](#), August 23 – September 2, 2013, Xiamen, China (co-sponsored by PICES);
- [*PICES-2013*](#) on “*Communicating forecasts, uncertainty and consequences of ecosystem change*”, October 11–20, 2013, Nanaimo, BC, Canada;
- NOWPAP/PICES training course on “*Remote sensing data analysis*”, fall 2013, Qingdao, China.