



PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN BUREAU FOR CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The European Bureau of Conservation and Development (EBCD) along with the FAO, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the IUCN Fisheries Expert Group (IUCN-CEM-FEG) and the Governments of Canada and Norway organized a side event “**The Future of the Ocean: Finding cooperative pathways towards 2030**” on 28 June during the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal. The aim of the event was to foster dialogue between diverging priorities and bridge narratives towards a shared understanding of a sustainable and resilient ocean by 2030.

According to the moderator, Ernesto Penas Lado (EBCD and member of IUCN-CEM-FEG) “*We all agree on the need to work towards sustainable management of the ocean to ensure a future for the next generations. We also agree on the fact that sustainable fisheries has to be part of the solution as it provides high-value proteins essential for a healthy diet with a low carbon footprint that can contribute to tackle malnutrition in the world. But where we differ, is on the means and solutions to reach these objectives*”.

Within this framework, the event gathered several speakers from international organizations, small-scale and industrial fisheries, the conservation community and the youth movement. Each panelist expressed his or her view on how the ocean should be sustainably used or conserved in the years to come, while outlining the potential barriers hampering the achievement of such a vision. Moreover, the panel established a genuine discussion with the audience, demonstrating the openness of different stakeholders and institutions to listen and learn from each other's perspective. Minna Epps, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), said the event was “*the first genuine interactive dialogue experienced so far at the UN Ocean Conference*”.

The outcome of the event is clear: **stakeholders, from all constituencies, need more inclusion in decision-making including through transparency**, as some voices have been left out of the ocean discussions for far too long. Against this background, coastal communities need to be better involved at all levels of ocean governance and management. Small-scale fishers in particular have voiced that “the blue economy has become a blue fear”. The moderator Ernesto Penas Lado concluded that the world needs to **transition from blue fear to blue trust**, with dialogue and inclusion being essential to that objective.

Industrial fisheries, small-scale fisheries, the conservation community and youth all proved they stand ready for dialogue to advance progress towards a sustainable and resilient future. However, additional spaces of dialogue are urgently needed if conservation, food security and socio-economic well-being in the ocean are to co-exist in the upcoming years.

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