



UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE NICE, FRANCE 2025

UNOC3 Conference Side Event

Ocean Justice: Championing fair and inclusive blue economy

9 June 2025, 13:00-14:30, NEO – art & culture lab x VogelART, Nice France

Organized by: Lancaster University; Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the Government of Fiji; Peace Boat United States; United Nations Development Programme Archipelagic and Island States Forum Secretariat (UNDP AIS); Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO and Segara Nusa Nawasena.

Background on the event (one paragraph)

As discussion around sustainable use of the ocean expands, it is critical to deepen our understanding about justice within new developments in the marine environment (Germond-Duret et al., 2023). Little attention has been given to the lived experience of ocean-dependent communities (e.g. artisanal fishers, women) who are particularly at risk of social injustice and dispossession, and to their very definition and understanding of the notion of ocean justice (Bennett et al, 2021; 2023). This solution-focused event explored how different speakers and participants understand ocean justice and the obstacles to achieve an inclusive blue economy. The meeting provided an avenue for participants to share their innovation and best practices that could serve as viable routes to ocean justice. The side-event spoke directly to the goal of “Voluntary Ocean Commitments” by mobilizing and engaging all relevant stakeholders including governments, different UN bodies, and civil society from the Global North and the Global South that are vital for transforming into sustainable and inclusive ocean-based economies and achieving Goal 14 and its targets.

Key Issues discussed (5-8 bullet points)

- The law of the sea & the blue economy frameworks
- Blue justice and the UN Ocean Decade: challenges, opportunities & expected outcome
- Coastal communities’ voices in blue economy processes: analysis of policy & legislation
- Fiji and inclusive blue economy: perspective, experience & best practices

- Peace Boat and UN Ocean Decade Programs
- Ecoship: sustainable shipping and coastal community resilience leaving no one behind
- Cross-cutting issues: How to implement the recommendations proposed by speakers? What are the obstacles? How can the best practices be replicated in other contexts?

Key recommendations for action / voluntary commitments

The side-event recommended that governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, the private sector and philanthropic organizations to:

- Look at blue economy from justice lens as we need to speak to those ‘unseen’ and ‘unrepresented’ in blue economy processes.
- Advance ‘multispecies justice’ approach to blue economy that take into accounts the rights of human, especially ocean-dependent communities such as Indigenous People, women and small-scale fishers and more than human world such as microbes, marine fauna & their habitats.
- Ensure that blue economy initiatives are fully integrated into national and regional ocean governance frameworks, and that these are inclusive and remain adaptive to new and relevant knowledge.
- Increase investment and funding for a healthy ocean and communities who depend on it. Ocean is 99% of planet living space where biodiversity thrives, yet Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 is the least funded SDG.
- Explore new financial innovation and creative ways for inclusive blue economy where human and nature can thrive, for example through ‘blended finance’, ‘public-private partnership’, and ‘blue bond’.
- Urgently address the negative consequences of blue economy development towards Indigenous People, small-scale fishers, women and girls, young people and children around the world who are facing challenges posed by ocean grabbing, militarization and exclusion due to expansion of blue economy activities.
- Strengthen the capacity of young people to access marine science, including marine social sciences, and to actively participate in blue economy and ocean-climate-biodiversity governance.
- Embark on innovative solutions to support just energy transition, sustainable shipping and coastal community resilience leaving no one behind.
- Emphasize co-design and co-development of solutions in blue economy planning, implementation and monitoring processes.
- Ensure meaningful participation of communities in blue economy beyond providing them a seat on the decision-making table. This implies the need to provide capacity building to enable communities to participate in negotiation and management of community-led initiatives.
- Advance the principle of ‘mutual learning’ and ‘partnership’ that highlight the needs, interests and active role of communities in the blue economy processes.