



UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE NICE, FRANCE 2025

UNOC3 Conference Side Event

Coastal stewardship: from tools to action

**13/06/2025, 13:15-14:40, Ocean Sustainability: Trade and
Blue Food House, Green Zone**

**Organized by: International Institute for Environment and
Development (IIED), Ministry of Blue Economy and
Fisheries of Zanzibar, The World Bank, WorldFish, Rare,
Comunidad y Biodiversidad, Mwambao Coastal Community
Network, FAO**

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Coastal communities—especially small-scale fishers and fish workers—play a critical role in sustaining ocean health, supporting biodiversity, and contributing to global food and nutrition security. Yet they often bear the greatest costs of conservation and management efforts, while benefits flow elsewhere. This event brought together leading voices from small-scale fisheries, conservation, finance, social protection, and community networks to discuss practical tools that enable and incentivise coastal stewardship, supporting more effective and equitable ocean governance.

Key Issues discussed (5-8 bullet points)

- Mondy Muhando (Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar) opened the session by emphasising the need for tools to support community-driven approaches to fisheries management and sustainable development. This was followed by a panel discussion where each panellist outlined a specific tool for enabling and incentivising coastal stewardship and discussed the barriers to more effective or wider implementation:
- Rocky Sanchez Tirona (Rare) discussed the use of **Preferential Access rights and devolved community governance** arrangements to help enable community-led conservation of coastal waters.
- Stuart Fulton (Comunidad y Biodiversidad) highlighted the value of distributing **seed funds or small grants directly to coastal communities** to implement community-led nature-positive projects or businesses.
- Sakhile Tsotsobe (Mwambao Coastal Community Network) outlined Mwambao's **community eco-credit programme**, which incentivises community conservation, restoration and management activities.
- Samiya Selim (University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh) shared insights from her research on **Bangladesh's Rice Compensation Scheme**, a government-led social protection initiative that provides rice to fishers to compensate for income lost during fishing bans, and to encourage compliance with measures to manage the country's hilsa fisheries.
- Hañela Ancona (Sirenas de México), a representative of a community of fisherwomen engaged in **citizen science and marine monitoring**, spoke about the challenges her group faces in accessing funding as an informal organisation.
- Kristín Gunnarsdóttir von Kistowski (World Bank) outlined how PROBLUE, the multi-donor trust fund for the blue economy, can support countries to use **Blue Social Protection** to promote sustainable fisheries, including by providing grants for diagnostic work to unlock larger investments, or co-financing investments.
- Manuel Barange (FAO) concluded the session by reflecting on the need for diverse, context-specific solutions to address the complex challenges of ecological and social sustainability.

Key recommendations for action / voluntary commitments (5-6 bullet points)

- Rights-based and community-led approaches are essential to ensuring effective and equitable ocean governance.
- Ocean finance must reach coastal communities to support environmental stewardship, including through initiatives to incentivise stewardship.
- Social protection can be designed or adapted to support more productive and sustainable fisheries.
- See also IIED [Insight](#)