Dialogue 4: Science, data and research

Facilitators: Tyrone Ridgway (University of Queensland) and Makoto Suwa (World Bank)

Context

The principles of a sustainable ocean economy represent an enormous opportunity for the African region. A sustainable ocean economy essentially conceptualises oceans as systems where spatial planning integrates conservation, sustainable use, resource extraction, bioprospecting, sustainable energy production and maritime transport. A sustainable ocean economy therefore incorporates ocean values and services into economic modelling and decision-making processes, and constitutes a sustainable development framework for developing countries addressing equity in access to, development of, and the sharing of benefits from marine resources; offering scope for re-investment in human development and the alleviation of national debt burdens.

As such, a sustainable ocean economy offers the prospect of sustained, environmentally sound, socially inclusive economic growth, as well as fostering innovation. That said, while healthy ocean assets will continue to offer tremendous opportunities for economic growth for coastal and island countries in the coming decades, ocean assets are under significant pressure from both local and global sources. At the same time, demand on these assets is expected to grow as population numbers continue to rise. It is therefore imperative to invest in long-term strategies to ensure healthy oceans that can support well being and livelihoods of people and contribute to economic opportunities that can be sustained.

To date, success stories in the maintenance of healthy ocean assets generally share three essential elements:

- Strong science
- Strong political leaders
- Engagement with multiple partners

Planning long-term investments in maintaining healthy ocean assets will require a good understanding of interactions between ocean biogeochemistry, physics, ecosystems, climate change and socio-economic activities, such as energy and food production, transport, tourism, and infrastructure. Research and data collection are undertaken in many countries but to date such efforts are often fragmented, uncoordinated and arenot necessarily tailored to aid decision making.

In order for the ocean to play an increasing role in supplying resources, a paradigm shift is needed on how valuable ocean assets are used and conserved. Science, data and research are fundamental to this process, and the objectives of the session are to discuss:

- priorities for research and data;
- how to ensure research findings and data are best used in decision making;
- how to create an enabling environment and overcome shortfalls to support priority research agendas, data collection, and decision making.

Proposed schedule

Time		
Introduction	**10:45-11:10**	Introduction and recap of the discussions of the day before (5 min) Introduction of participants (10 min) Video message from Dr. Jane Lubchenco (5 min) Presentation by Professor Romeela Mohee, Vice Chancellor, University of Mauritius (5 min) - UM's experience in capacity building and research activities to support and improve livelihoods of coastal communities and lessons learned.
Breakup discussion	**11:10-12:50**	**Plenary discussion** **Science, research and data: Why are they important and relevant?** Keynote presentation by Dr Ruby Moothien Pillay, Director, Mauritius Oceanography Institute - The role of research institution to support the formulation and implementation of policies through leading and coordination of interdisciplinary research activities related to ocean. **Breakout discussion** **Topic 1: Priorities: Identify priority areas** - What are priority research areas to support sustainable ocean-related economic activities? **Session discussion** **Topic 2: Challenges and opportunities: Identifying the 5 greatest challenges and opportunities facing science, research and data.** - What do you see as the greatest challenges in science, research and data? - What opportunities are there to improve quality, quantity and use of science, research and data? **Session discussion** **Topic 3: Actions** - What actions need to be taken to address challenges identified above? - How to capitalize on opportunities to move the agenda forward? **Session discussion**
Wrap up	**12:50-13:00**	**Conclusions and next steps.** **Close.**