

ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (APPF)

24TH ANNUAL MEETING

RESOLUTION APPF24/RES.03

CONSERVING AND SUSTAINABLY MANAGING OUR SHARED OCEAN

(Sponsored by Canada)

The 24th Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum;

Considering that oceans cover three quarters of the Earth's surface, contain 97 per cent of its water, and house millions of its species;

Aware that the ocean is a conduit for 90 per cent of global trade, activity that connects people and markets, creates livelihoods and enables growth and prosperity;

Noting that marine and coastal resources and related industries represent about 5 per cent – or US\$3 trillion – of the world's annual gross domestic product (GDP);

Emphasizing that oceans are the largest source of protein on Earth, and that the Asia-Pacific region consumes 70 per cent of the world's fish products;

Cognizant of the economic importance of marine and coastal resources, which provide livelihoods for more than three billion people;

Considering that marine resources in the Asia-Pacific region account for more than 50 per cent of the world's capture fishery production and over 80 per cent of the world's aquaculture production;

Recognizing that almost a third of the world's fish stocks are considered to be over-fished, and that fishing subsidies can contribute to the depletion of fish species, thereby undermining efforts to restore global fisheries and related employment opportunities;

Underscoring the need to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;

Bearing in mind that oceans currently absorb about 26 per cent of anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions, and therefore play a fundamental role in maintaining the stability of the Earth's climate;

Drawing attention to the increased oceanic uptake of carbon dioxide, which is a contributing factor in ocean acidification, a phenomenon that threatens ocean biodiversity and the survival of many ocean species and marine organisms;

Mindful that ambitious reductions in global carbon dioxide emissions will be needed to prevent further ocean acidification;

Concerned about pollutants from sea and land-based activities, including gas and oil extraction, marine debris, and harmful substances and nutrients from wastewater and industrial and agricultural runoff that enter the ocean;

Recognizing that nutrient pollution can create oxygen-depleted "dead zones" in the ocean;

Aware that an estimated eight million tons of plastic are dumped each year in the ocean;

Reaffirming that science, technology and innovation are vital to understanding the ocean, and essential to supporting a science-based approach to decision-making about the ocean;

Recalling the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, which establishes the legal framework within which activities in the ocean must be carried out, and its related agreements, including the 1995 *United Nations Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks*;

Also recalling the *Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter*, the *International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships*, and other relevant conventions developed by the International Maritime Organization;

Also recalling the UN *Convention on Biological Diversity*, and noting that the States that are party to this Convention have agreed to a target of conserving, by 2020, 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, through systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures;

Reiterating the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a specific goal on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources;

Noting the Xiamen Declaration, adopted by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ocean-Related Ministers in August 2014, which calls for concerted actions in relation to conservation and disaster resilience, food security and food-related trade, marine science, technology and innovation, and the “Blue Economy”;

Welcoming the 2nd “Our Ocean” conference hosted by Chile in October 2015;

Recalling the Valparaiso Declaration, adopted by the 9th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) in 2001, which established a shared commitment to conserve the Pacific Ocean;

Determined to address declining ocean health and productivity;

Convinced that instituting effective measures to protect ocean ecosystems and resources will benefit the people of the Asia Pacific region, now and in the future;

RESOLVES TO:

1. **Recognize** the imperative of protecting and preserving the ocean, which is common heritage shared by all;
2. **Raise** public awareness of ocean-related issues, especially among youth;
3. **Urge** APPF Member States to take action to reduce marine pollution, including nutrient pollution and other land-based pollutants;
4. **Call** on APPF Member States to address marine debris as part of national and regional strategies dealing with waste management;
5. **Encourage** work towards the restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems in order to strengthen oceanic health and the resilience of coastal communities that rely on the ocean;
6. **Promote** tools for sustainable coastal and oceans management, including the enactment of marine protected areas, consistent with international law and based on the best available scientific information;

7. **Support** efforts that can minimize and mitigate ocean acidification, in line with scientific findings;
8. **Appeal** to APPF Member States to enhance the transparency and reporting of existing fisheries subsidy programs through the World Trade Organization;
9. **Encourage** the elimination of national subsidies that contribute to over-fishing;
10. **Contribute** to regional efforts to eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, in accordance with international agreements and science-based management plans;
11. **Assist** small-scale artisanal fishers by improving their access to marine resources and markets and by enhancing their ability to contribute to food security;
12. **Prioritize** efforts that can help to rebuild over-exploited, depleted and recovering fish stocks;
13. **Advance** science-based policy making and robust ocean observation by working to improve scientific and research capacity in the Asia-Pacific region;
14. **Support** initiatives that can further the understanding of the effects of climate change on the ocean and marine biodiversity;
15. **Improve** ocean-related scientific cooperation, including by enhancing information and data-sharing, facilitating technology dissemination, and encouraging capacity-building projects between and among APPF Member States;
16. **Encourage** all APPF Member States that have not yet done so to become parties to international agreements that address the protection and preservation of the marine environment and its living marine resources;
17. **Provide** oversight of the national implementation of international and regional conventions and commitments on ocean conservation and management;
18. **Work** to mainstream ocean-related concerns in policy, legislative and budgeting processes.