

Ensuring sustainability of oceans for a healthy economy- securing livelihoods and enhancing security

Concept Note

The significance of oceans for the global economy is immense and the progress of blue economy will depend on the achievement of sustainable development. A good example of this symbiotic relationship is the fisheries sector, wherein, 85% of the global population is involved in fisheries and aquaculture, and 75% of the global fishing vessels are from Asia. Increasing ocean acidification, temporal changes and unsustainable fishing pose high risks for the fisheries sector and in turn for food security. According to a paper on the High Level Panel on Sustainable Blue Ocean Economy focusing on the 'Future of food from the sea', the ocean is a major food source and is projected to become an essential component in the global food palate. The role of oceans in climate change is essential to the success of limiting global warming to 2 degrees and the subsequent 1.5 degrees. Oceans are the world's heat and carbon sinks and rapid and devastating changes to their ecosystem will lead to irreparable damages to ocean ecology. This will in turn lead to significant economic and social losses both for global and national economies.

In the current COVID scenario, there is a need to examine the socio-economic conditions of India's coastal regions. With significant share of the coastal community riddled with poverty, the current crisis would exacerbate their vulnerabilities. The global economic recession would impact shipping, tourism and fishing significantly. With relief, recovery and stimulus packages being envisaged for impacted sectors, the need to align it with SDGs will become important to ensure their implementation is on track. These recovery packages could be a silver lining to adopt and implement sustainable measures that would have a long term impact on the sectors enhancing their resilience to economic shocks. The food security of coastal communities is also dependent on oceans and the increasing inclusion of fish products into the global food system is increasing. Ocean harbours fragile ecosystems and is one of the most significant carbon sinks for the world hence, ensuring its health is essential for economic success. Adoption of sustainable methods can provide long term economic benefits and provide access to new opportunities. Examining India's SDG progress in context to ocean and its allied sectors would be essential to understand the holistic development.

- Engaging coastal communities in sustainability endeavours can aid their economic status and help in improving their quality of life. How can blue economy framework help coastal and ocean based economies attain their SDG goals by 2030?

- Food and nutrition security are important imperatives for every country and for countries like India- attaining food security requires a robust and healthy ocean economy. With nine coastal states and millions of coastal communities relying on the sea for food and livelihoods such as fishery- the need to address sustainability should be prioritised.
- It is essential to examine innovative financing mechanisms that fulfil economic and sustainability concerns in consonance. There is a need to explore the possibility innovative financing mechanisms that integrate communities in conservation and preservation of oceans while earning their income and gaining a good quality of life. Can India explore financing mechanisms such as blue bonds or others to engage communities in the blue economy Agenda? What are the other major SDG goals that could benefit and improve by accelerating the sustainability of oceans?
- The vital sectors of blue economy such as Tourism, Shipping and Fishing could be a catalyst and essential to shape a sustainable livelihood framework. These sectors should be developed in a responsible manner to ensure they achieve blue economy objectives, create job opportunities and aid in preserving a healthy ocean.
- Climate change plays a vital role for coastal economies and livelihoods- increased deoxygenation, nutrient pollution, eutrophication and temperature fluctuations increase the stress on the livelihood challenges that face coastal communities. Such temporal and geo-physical changes lead to loss of fish population, coral bleaching, loss of biodiversity and inundation of low lying areas among other issues.

Draft Agenda

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| 11.00 – 11.15 am | <p>Opening and Welcome Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Peter Rimmele, Resident Representative, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung India office • Mr. Souvik Bhattacharjya, Associate Director, Centre for Resource Efficiency and Governance, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) • Amb. Rajiv Bhatia, Chair, FICCI Core Group on Blue Economy (TBC) |
| 11.15 am- 11.30 am | <p>Presentation of Discussion Paper by TERI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Mani Juneja, Research Associate, Centre for Resource Efficiency and Governance TERI • Ms. Asha L Giriyan, Fellow, Coastal Ecology and Marine Resources Centre, TERI, • Ms. Christina D Souza, Research Associate, Coastal Ecology and Marine Resources Centre, TERI |
| 11.30 am- 1.00 pm | <p>Session I - Looking Beyond the Obvious- Underlining the importance of oceans for Food security, Climate Change and preserving biodiversity</p> <p>Chair- Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan AVSM & Bar, VSM (Retd) Director General, National Maritime Foundation</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Aaron Savio Lobo, Marine conservation scientist, member of the IUCN SSC Marine Conservation Committee (TBC) • Dr. R. Ramasubramanian , Principal scientist, Coastal Research Systems, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation • Dr. Asir Ramesh, DISE - Integrated Social Sciences and Economics Division, National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change • Dr. Fraddry D’ Souza, Fellow and Area Convenor, TERI • Dr. Pushp Bajaj, Associate Fellow, National Maritime Foundation |
| 1.00 pm- 1.45 pm | <p>Lunch</p> |
| 1.45 pm – 3.15 pm | <p>Session II – Sustainable Livelihoods in Blue economy Sectors & Leveraging Regional cooperation</p> <p>Chair- Prof. V. N Attri, IORA & FICCI Task force on Blue economy (TBC)</p> <p>Speakers -</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Yugraj Yadava, Director & Project Manager, Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) • Dr. Amey Sapre, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) • Mr. Deepak Shetty, Former Director General of Shipping, Government of India • Ms. Mani Juneja, Research Associate and Ria Sinha, Fellow, Centre for Resource Efficiency and Governance, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) |
| 3.15 pm- 3.45 pm | Open Discussion |
| 3.45 pm- 4.00 pm | Closing Remarks & Vote of Thanks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Swati Ganeshan, Fellow and Area Convener, Centre for Resource Efficiency and Governance, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) • Mr. Pankaj Madan, Advisor/Teamleader Program Coordination, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung India office |