

Sustainable fisheries need transparency

Ina Parlina

THE JAKARTA POST/NUSA DUA, BALI

Transparency is essential to achieving sustainable fisheries and deterring illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, a panel session on the final day of the Our Ocean Conference (OOC) concluded on Tuesday.

Indonesia, which has received praise for its stern policy of sinking seized illegal fishing vessels, is moving toward ensuring greater traceability and transparency.

Indonesia pledged on Tuesday its commitment to creating an electronic fishing logbook to improve data quality, promote compliance and prevent IUU fishing, which is often intertwined with other crimes like human trafficking.

"This program will start at the end of 2018 for over 300,000 fishing vessels over 300 gross tons and in 2019 it will include over

Indonesia committed to creating programs to support transparency

Information, knowledge sharing essential

10,000 fishing vessels over 10 gross tons," Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry Capture Fisheries Director General M. Zulficar Mochtar said during the session.

"We believe that sustainable fisheries management can only be implemented when sufficient data is available."

Federated States of Micronesia President Peter Christian used the stage to announce a new initiative called the Technology for Tuna Transparency (T3) Challenge, which he said would not only improve monitoring of commercial fisheries through the utilization of an electronic platform,

but also strengthen enforcement capabilities at sea.

"We welcome you to join the T3 Challenge," he said, adding that he hoped the platform would help transform the global seafood market.

International ocean advocacy group Oceana CEO Andrew Sharpless said that transparency was indeed "the most fundamental" principle in sustainable fisheries.

"Transparency is about delivering accountability and deterrence," he said.

Norwegian Fisheries Minister Harald T. Nesvik said that information and knowledge sharing was an essential tool, and urged the international community to come together to combat transnational organized crimes in the fishing industry.

Norway, together with Indonesia and seven other countries from four continents, including

Palau and Namibia, earlier this month signed a ministerial joint declaration against transnational organized fishery crimes during a meeting in Copenhagen.

In the declaration, Norway vowed to share knowledge to help developing countries fight against illegal fishing.

"Combating transnational organized fishery crime is vital for the life under water. The ministerial declaration is an important step toward fulfilling the UN SDGs [sustainable development goals]. We must continue to raise awareness of this issue," Nesvik said, referring to SDG 14 on ocean-related targets.

Yvonne Sadovy, fishery expert from Hong Kong University, warned that such tools would not be effective without the shared commitment of governments, civil society and businesspeople.

"We have tools to achieve much

of these [tackle IUU, collect data, conduct research or reduce the use of destructive fishing gear and marine plastic debris]. What we need more than anything is the political will. But we also need the societal willpower to make things happen," she said.

A case in point is the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-initiated instrument called the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA). The PSMA, the first binding international agreement to specifically target IUU fishing, requires countries to conduct port inspections of fishing vessels, regardless of the status of their flags, to prevent illegal catches from landing up in ports.

To date, 50 countries, including Indonesia, have signed the agreement, which came into force in 2016.

The FAO has urged all countries to join the PSMA, which it

described as one of the most cost-effective ways to curb IUU fishing, during the OOC in Malta last year.

A proposal to create governance on the high seas was also brought forth during the discussion, with Indonesia once again calling for surveillance in international waters, which make up about 61 percent of the world's surface, to prevent IUU fishing and illegal transshipment.

"Indonesia is also concerned about the sustainability of resources in the high seas. The high seas are prone to illegal fishing because of a lack of monitoring and weak enforcement," Zulficar said.

Indonesia announced its commitment to increasing the number of observers of vessels fishing in the high seas in a program that would include 100 observers, 350 fishing vessels and 300,000 observation bases.



JP/Zul Trio Anggono

New experience: Attendees try out a virtual reality experience on underwater beauty and diversity during the 2018 Our Ocean Conference in Nusa Dua, Bali, on Tuesday.

INDEX

Bali scores 51 in first Ocean Health Index in Indonesia

The Marine and Fisheries Office of Bali province revealed in a release on Tuesday, that the ocean around Bali scored 51 in the Ocean Health Index (OHI+), with 0 being the lowest score and 100 the highest.

Bali is the pilot project for the OHI+ study in Indonesia, as it is the first province to conduct a comprehensive study about the quality of the water around the region.

The OHI+ measures the status of nine goals, namely food provision, artisanal fishing opportunities, natural products, carbon storage, coastal protection, clean waters, tourism and recreation, biodiversity and sense of place.

"The lowest score, 24, was obtained in carbon storage. This is because the critical marine ecosystem for carbon sequestration in Bali has been decreasing. That means we need to pay more attention to improving the habitat con-

servation for this sector," Made Gunaja, the head of Bali administration for the Marine and Fisheries Office said at the Our Ocean Conference on Monday.

Made said the other goals that also had low scores were Coastal Protection with 35 and Artisanal Fishing Opportunities with 37.

The result of the study shows that some sectors are doing relatively well. Biodiversity scored the highest with 94, followed by clean waters with 79 and food provision with 59.

I Made Iwan Dewantama, Bali Island manager of Conservation International, said he hoped the OHI+ index study of Bali would be the model and soon would also be followed by other provinces across Indonesia.

"The government has issued Law No. 23/2014 on regional administration, which stipulates that the authority manages the

sea belonging to each province. But those provinces are still confused about how to manage their sea area. This index will arm them with knowledge and facts about the condition of their sea, which sectors need more attention and what must they do to improve them," he said on Tuesday.

Iwan also said that since improving the sea condition needs collaboration among various stakeholders, the index will also help stakeholders to decide what roles they take part in.

"With this index as a guideline, we hope the policy will be in line with it, so when the next index is made the scores will improve. [...] Ideally every two years a new index can be launched, but it could be more than two years. But at least in those two years, hopefully changes will have been made, some new policies will have been executed and we will be able to

see the improvement," he said.

With a score of 51, the Bali index was still below the score achieved by Indonesia's ocean at the global OHI+ in 2013, which stood at 64.

However, Iwan said the score was not published to judge the condition of Bali's ocean, but to help the region to improve its condition.

"This score is not just a number, it must be used as a reflection to improve the scores in the future. We need to know what recommendations we need to make it better," he said.

The OHI+ study began in August 2016. It is an initiative of Conservation International Indonesia (CI) and the Bali administration, which also collaborates with other non-government organizations and academics.

— JP/GEMMA HOLLIANI CAHYA

YOUTH ACTION

Youth combat plastic waste, 'millennial' way

Gemma Holliani Cahya

THE JAKARTA POST/NUSA DUA, BALI

"Who here is below 18? Raise your hand," 17-year-old Melati Wijsen enthusiastically asked dozens of people attending a discussion at the 2018 Our Ocean Conference (OOC) on Tuesday in Nusa Dua, Bali.

But no one raised their hand. And the room immediately burst into laughter when a middle-aged man slowly raised his hand.

Most of Melati's audience were adults who attended the OOC representing either governments, environmental groups, businesses or the media.

Not many of her peers came to the global ocean forum, so that when Melati showed up with her black leather ankle boots and black t-shirt emblazoned with "Bye Plastic Bags" in pink, she added a pop of color to the room.

"I'm asking this not to make you feel old," she smiled. "But really I want to make a point that I'm the only person here below 18 years old. This panel has incredible knowledge of what is actually happening in today's world. But why am I, as a student, not learning about it?"

"If I am not being made aware of [the plastic waste problem], how can I be part of the solutions you keep mentioning?"

Melati, who was born and raised in Bali, founded a youth-driven nongovernmental organization called the Bye Plastic Bag with her little sister, Isabel Wijsen, when they were 12 and 10 years old, respectively.

They started the movement to raise awareness of the dangers of plastic waste and helped persuade Bali Governor Mangku Pasitika to issue a policy to ban plastic bags starting January next year.

But their campaign did not stop in the Island of the Gods.

In the past five years, they have met with 20,000 students across Indonesia to raise awareness about the danger of plastic waste and on what youth can do to save the ocean and the world from plastic litter. The group has now members from 25 countries across the globe.

The easiest way to raise awareness about the campaign among the younger generations is to make the no-plastic lifestyle a trend, Melati said.

"I have not used plastic bags for the last five years. I also always bring my Tumblr anywhere. So,

this is really doable and we want to make [the lifestyle] super cool," she said. "To get the young generation's attention, we should definitely make it a trend. And with social media, that can be very easy."

Her group's Instagram account @byebyeplasticbags, where she often shares practical activities and information about the anti-plastic campaign and engages in discussions with followers on Instagram stories, has almost 31,000 followers — most of whom are young Indonesians.

On Tuesday, Melati called on the government to start raising awareness in schools about saving the ocean.

"Change starts in the classroom. If the kids and youth don't know what the problem is, how can we sit in a fancy room like this and expect solutions to happen?" she said.

Across the globe, many young people have also initiated their own movement to combat marine waste.

The OOC meeting was also attended by 189 participants aged 17 to 35 years coming from 52 countries. They were selected from 500 candidates representing 56 countries.

One of them was Rahyang Nusantara, who leads the Indonesia Diet Kantong Plastik (Indonesia Goes on a Plastic Diet) Movement (GIDKP).

With thousands of signed petitions in 2016 at change.org to introduce a policy that requires shoppers to pay for a plastic bag, the group convinced the government to conduct a trial run that same year.

The GIDKP has also visited dozens of high schools across Jakarta to facilitate students in creating innovations on what they could do in combating plastic.

Social media has also appeared to be one of its key platforms to spread awareness.

"[Teenagers] nowadays have a lot of followers, so we can use that power to spread this campaign, to deliver the message to their peers," he said.

Marine Affairs and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti said earlier that the Bali meeting was for the young generation's future.

"Your presence in the 2018 OOC shows that we, Indonesia and other countries who have loved and preserved the ocean, care very much about the future generations; they are you, the future leaders."

ARTS

Elevating awareness through art

I Wayan Juniarta

THE JAKARTA POST/SANUR, BALI

Art has been increasingly recognized as a powerful medium through which to raise public awareness about environmental issues. "Semesta Terumbu Karang" (Coral Universe), a freshly unveiled ceramic installation designed by American artist Courtney Mattison is a testimony to the rising convergence between art and the ecological movement.

The installation — which comprises 2,000 ceramic pieces in the shape of various soft and hard corals arranged into six circles along an 18 x 2.5-meter panel — stands on the wall directly opposite the main gate of the Coral Triangle Center (CTC) in Sanur.

The installation was created in a two-year-long collaborative process involving the CTC, a not-for-profit ocean conservation organization, the government-managed Ceramic Technology and Creative Industry Body (BTIKK), Jenggala Ceramics, as

well as more than 300 volunteers, including local artists Ricko Gabriel, Alfiah Rahdini, Sasanti Puri Ardini and Agung Ivan WB.

The collaborative process, which saw Mattison flying to Bali several times to teach volunteers how to craft the pieces as well as participating in numerous video calls, bestowed both the artist and the volunteers with a greater understanding of the state of the country's coral reefs.

"It is my first project that involves other people in its creation process. It was wonderful, we had amazing conversations. I believe the piece is more powerful because it was created by a large number of people," she said.

Ocean life, coral reefs in particular, is not a recent calling for Mattison. When she pursued her undergraduate degree at Skidmore College, a liberal arts institution in New York, she majored in two subjects: Ceramic sculpture and marine biology.

Her works, including the recent one at the United States Em-

bassy in Jakarta, are heavily inspired by coral reefs. Her diving trip to Raja Ampat and Komodo Island had introduced her to the breathtaking beauty of Indonesia's underwater treasure.

"Coral reefs have always been my muse, and I want this piece to highlight what is there to preserve and why we need to act so urgently before the threat of climate change takes hold," she said.

US Ambassador to Indonesia Joseph R. Donovan, who visited the installation on Tuesday, saw it as a powerful symbol of cooperation between the US and Indonesia.

"[It is] a powerful symbol of the way in which both American and Indonesian can partner across different sectors to protect our ocean resources. It celebrates Indonesia's coral reefs and the value they provide to Indonesia and the world while also highlights the threats the coral reefs face," he said.

An avid diver, the ambassador spent more than 15 minutes inspecting the installation and

admiring the intricate details of each piece of ceramic art work.

Indonesia is believed to be home to the greatest diversity of coral reefs, with 480 species of hard coral, or 60 percent of the world's identified hard coral, found in eastern Indonesia.

The installation comprises the ceramic representations of more than 100 species of coral.

"Arts really have an important role in informing people about their natural environment and inspiring them to protect it. So I hope Courtney's work will continue informing the public about the frailty of coral reefs and the imperative to protect our shared ocean resources," Donovan said.

The installation was officially unveiled on Sunday in conjunction with the Our Ocean Conference and the celebration of the International Year of the Reef. An augmented reality application, the operation of which is triggered by the centerpiece of the installation, was also launched on that occasion.



JP/Zul Trio Anggono

Environmentally friendly: Recycle bags — made of cassava — are on display at the 2018 Our Ocean Conference in Nusa Dua, Bali, on Tuesday.