Not One Fit

The forthcoming Ocean Conference will be a changemaker for island and coastal states and communities as they seek strategies to raise ocean health and human well-being

A landmark Ocean Conference will be held in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017 to address measures for supporting the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14): conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Back in September 2015, the Prime Minister of Fiji, H.E. J.V. Bainimarama, warned, in his statement at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), of the decline in oceans' health, as evidenced by dying coral, marine pollution, damaged coastal ecosystems, declining fish stocks and ocean acidification, and proposed to convene the Triennial UN Conferences on Oceans and Seas.

...SDG14 implementation must bring about socioeconomic benefits to island and coastal states and communities...

In September 2016, H.E. Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of UNGA and Ambassador of Fiji to the UN in New York termed the Ocean Conference as the game-changer to ensure oceans' well-being. SDG14 addresses a wide range of issues related to oceans, namely, (14.1) marine pollution; (14.2) marine and coastal ecosystems; (14.3) ocean acidification; (14.4) overfishing; (14.5) coastal and marine area conservation; (14.6) fishery subsidies; (14.7) small island developing states; (14.a) science and research; (14.b) artisanal fishers; and (14.c) conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources. The expected outcome of the Ocean Conference was specified by the General Assembly Resolution 70/30 providing that the Conference shall adopt a "Call for Action", co-chairs' summaries, and a list of voluntary commitments.

Ocean health and well-being

The implementation of SDG14 is expected to reduce anthropogenic negative impacts on oceans and achieve better data of biophysical indicators. At the same time, SDG14 implementation must bring about socioeconomic benefits to island and coastal states and communities as referred to in 14.7 and 14.b. A co-relation of global ocean and coastal systems and human well-being has been increasingly underlined in recent years. Oceans and coastal systems enhance human health and well-being that can be harmed by the alteration of such systems. The Blue Ribbon Panel, established as an advisory body for the Global Partnership for Oceans spearheaded by the World Bank, identified five principles in aligning ocean health and human well-being: (i) sustainable livelihoods, social equity, and food security; (ii) a healthy ocean; (iii) effective governance systems; (iv) long-term viability; and (v) capacity building and innovation.

SIDS and HDI

How have small island developing states (SIDS) performed in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI). The average HDI of 2015 is 0.72 for the Caribbean SIDS, followed by the Pacific (0.64), the Indian Ocean (0.63) and West Africa (0.5), as shown in Fig.1. The index improvement rate (obtained by dividing the index of 2015 by the one of 2005) is the highest

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for the Indian Ocean and West Africa (1.1), followed by the Pacific (1.05) and the Caribbean (1.04). The box for Indian Ocean stretches most in Fig.1; the gap is the greatest for the Indian Ocean, followed by West Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean (standard deviation is 0.13 for the Indian Ocean, 0.11 for West Africa, 0.10 for the Pacific and 0.08 for the Caribbean.) A variance is noted among regions and within the region in terms of HDI for SIDS.

Strategies for Pacific SIDS

SIDS rely on their terrestrial and marine resources for their livelihood and development. Fishery is one of the key sectors for many Pacific SIDS. The Republic of Marshall Islands has boosted its fishery production by over 200 times for the recent 25 years (Table 1). On the contrary, the Republic of Palau has reduced its fish catch by 16 per cent for the last 25 years and by 29 per cent for the last 15 years. Palau has been driving measures to expand marine protected areas, as exemplified by the legislation that President Tommy Remengesau signed in December 2015 to designate 80 per cent of its ocean as protected areas and keep away extractive activities including fishing and mining. The latest figures show that Kiribati protects 20 per cent of its ocean and the Republic of Marshall Islands protects 0.2 per cent. Palau recorded about 140,000 inbound tourists, exceeding the Federated States of Micronesia (35,000), Marshall Islands (5,400) and Kiribati (3,900) in 2014. There is a trade-off between the protected areas and the fishery sector (Fig.2) and SIDS need to explore the measures that fit their respective conditions and capitalize on their potentials in achieving SDGs.

Protected areas and sustainable livelihood—case study of RMI

The Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) followed suit by adopting the legislation called "Protected Area Network Act" in September 2015. The legislation laid down specific provisions on a PAN office, a Technical Advisory Committee, the Local Resource Committee, a management plan, the PAN Fund, and enforcement. The RMI Environment Protection Authority conducted, with the support of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation Pacific Island Nations Fund, a pilot study of coastal and marine resource conservation and sustainable use in RMI. The questionnaire survey (n=71) was conducted in five communities in the area of Majuro, a capital of RMI just a year after the PAN Act was adopted.

The provisional outcome of the survey was presented at the 2nd General Meeting of the Islands and Oceans Net (IO Net), organized by the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in Tokyo, in December 2016. Half of the community members responded that they do not know the PAN Act and only 12 per cent responded they know it well or partially. For the implementation of the PAN Act, local people positively responded to the ideas of farming, craft making, tourism and other alternative income-generating activities. On the other hand, they are split over whether they will continue or reduce fishing. Local people underlined, as a success factor for PAN Act implementation,

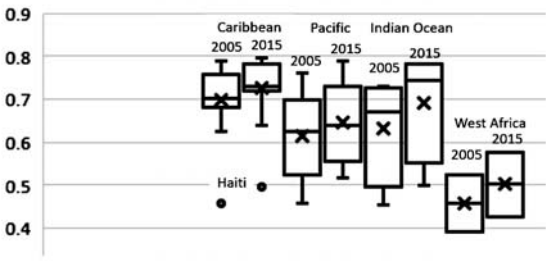

Fig.1: SIDS Human Development Index (2005 and 2015)

Note: Based on the data available for small island developing states namely 14 countries in the Caribbean, 9 in the Pacific, 4 in the Indian Ocean and 2 in West Africa.
Source: UNDP Human Development Reports (http://hdr.undp.org/en/data)

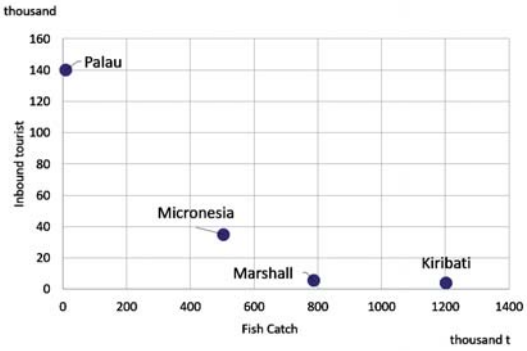

Fig.2: Fishery and Tourism (2014)

UN Data, World Bank

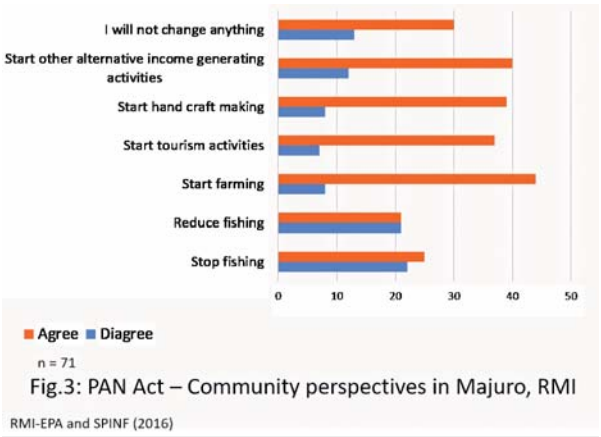

Fig.3: PAN Act – Community perspectives in Majuro, RMI

RMI-EPA and SPINF (2016)

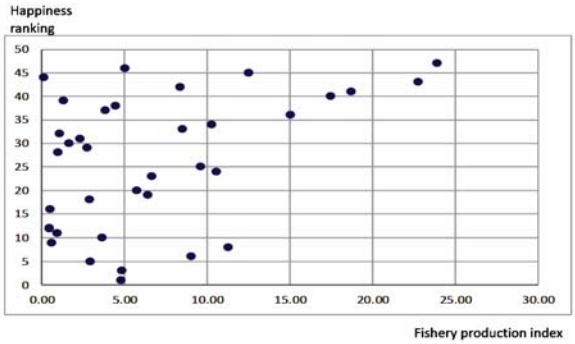

Fig.4: Happiness and Fishery production by Prefecture in Japan

Developed from Japan Research Institute and Ministry of General Coordination, Japan
Note: Fishery production Index is developed by dividing fishery production (million JPY) by total economic production (billion JPY).

Table 1: Fish Production (1990-2015), tonnes

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	Increase fold from 1990	Increase fold from 2000
Kiribati	26,852	32,121	35,446	30,562	43,116	145,832	5.43	4.11
Marshall Islands	380	375	8,261	57,583	59,751	89,714	236.09	10.86
Micronesia, Fed.States of	2,362	8,077	23,455	32,356	31,520	68,852	29.15	2.94
Palau	1,075	1,414	1,271	1,431	967	898	0.84	0.71
Nauru	180	480	380	330	589	530	2.94	1.39

DAO, 2017. Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics

(i) political will; (ii) community leadership; (iii) financial support; (iv) technical assistance; (v) financial assistance by international partners; (vi) scientific information; (vii) training; and (viii) public awareness.

Table 2: Happiness and Fishery production by Pretecture in Japan

Prefecture	Happiness Ranking	Fishery production Index
Fukui	1	4.77
Tokyo	2	N/A
Toyama	3	4.83
Nagano	4	Landlocked
Ishikawa	t	2.91
Shimane	6	9.05
Shiga	7	Landlocked
Tottori	8	11.26
Aichi	9	0.62
	Average	5.57

Developed from Japan Research Institute and Ministry ofGeneral Coordination, Japan

Island and coastal community empowerment—the case of Japan

Japan is an archipelago that consists of 6,852 islands. Inhabited islands are administered by one of 47 prefectures. It is worth examining how people in Japanese island and coastal communities are doing in the pursuit of sustainable development. Yet, it is an arduous task to select suitable indicators for this purpose. The Happiness Index is one of the attempts to measure human well-being. The World Happiness Report ranks 155 countries based on their Happiness Index. Japan was raked at 51st in the 2017 report. None of the SIDS in the Pacific is ranked in the report. It is worth noting that the report also indicates the changes in happiness over the last 10 years. Japan had negative change (-0.447), meaning that the happiness level declined over the past 10 years.

There is a similar attempt made in Japan to analyze happiness across prefectures. The Japan Research Institute examines the happiness level and ranks 47 prefectures based on 65 indicators. I have developed a fishery production index by dividing fishery production (mn JPY) by the prefecture's total economic production (bn JPY). Then I plotted each prefecture against the horizontal axis of the fishery production index and the vertical axis of happiness ranking. The higher the fishery production index is, the greater the prefecture relies on fishery for economic activities. The small ranking numbers indicate that the happiness level is high and the large numbers indicate that the prefecture is poorly rated on the Happiness Index. A moderate co-relation was observed ($r=0.42$, $p<0.05$). The prefectures ranked for the top nine had a 4.28 fishery production index, followed by the group of top 10-19 (4.77), the group of top 20-29 (8.31) and the group of top 30-35 (12.12). However, when I looked at the top nine of the happiness ranking list, the average fishery production index is 5.57, much higher than the group of the top 1–19. The substantive proportion of fishery production in the prefectural economy neither guarantees higher happiness nor undermines the happiness level.

Island and coastal land- and seascapes expose us to vulnerability while, at the same time, provide us with resources and opportunities for achieving sustainable development. There is no one-fit-for-all solutions. Yet, there can be lessons learned to share among us. Concerted actions across the countries and the world will instigate our ingenuity to pursue innovation in developing policies, promoting collective actions, applying technology, mobilizing funds, and developing partnership towards achieving sustainable development. The Ocean Conference of 2017 will provide us a historic opportunity and it is up to us to better utilize this opportunity for promoting ocean health and human well-being in the context of supporting the implementation of SDG14.

For more

oceanconference.un.org/documents
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