

Big Business, Environmentalists, Science Agree Pathway to Align Ocean Health and Human Well-Being

October 16, 2013— A unique panel of business, government, conservation and academic leaders has agreed a global strategy for aligning ocean health and human well-being. The [Blue Ribbon Panel](#), which includes 21 global experts from 16 countries, emphasizes that without action to turn around the declining health of the ocean, the consequences for economies, communities and ecosystems will be irreversible.

Recent science from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO) has intensified the focus on declining ocean health.

"Ocean change is climate change and vice versa," said **panel chair and ocean adviser to the IPCC Ove Hoegh-Guldberg**. "With looming threats of rising sea levels, warmer waters and a growing human population we need healthy oceans and coasts to mitigate climate change, feed billions and protect coastal communities."

But there is good news: solutions exist that benefit both oceans and economies, according to the panel's report.

Convened by the World Bank to advise the [Global Partnership for Oceans](#) (GPO), the Panel includes high-level players ranging from CEOs of some of the largest seafood companies in the world - including Thai Union Frozen Products, Bumble Bee Foods and High Liner Foods - to government officials and prominent marine conservationists.

According to the panel, fragmented approaches that fail to consider social, political, economic and ecological relationships will fail to meet the complex challenges facing ocean health. The report calls for an integrated approach to ocean investment and emphasizes the essential role of public-private partnerships.

The panel agreed that the Global Partnership for Oceans is a platform that brings together the multi-stakeholder support, technical expertise and finance needed to change the course on oceans.

"Getting to healthy oceans is a global challenge that needs the concentrated effort of big and small business, government and science," said **Ove Hoegh-Guldberg**. "Though they brought very different world views, everyone on this panel agreed that we can't keep going with business-as-usual and all parts of society must be part of the solution."

The panel agreed there is no "silver bullet" to resolving urgent ocean challenges. Therefore, it proposes these five principles to ensure effective GPO investments: (1) sustainable livelihoods, social equity and food security; (2) a healthy ocean; (3) effective governance systems; (4) long-term viability and (5) capacity building and innovation.

"Being a member of the Blue Ribbon Panel has been a rewarding opportunity to collaborate with key players and thought leaders in ocean sustainability," said **panelist Chris Lischewski, President and CEO of Bumble Bee Foods**. "The process reinforces that improving ocean health is a complex process that requires participation and interaction across a broad sphere of communities, industries and governments."

The Panel's principle-based strategy provides an approach to prioritize where, when and how the GPO can take action with high impact. The panel recommends that the principles be incorporated into all levels of reform - from fisheries management to incentives for pollution reduction to habitat restoration.

"Bringing this diverse and powerful group together to reach consensus on the challenges and what needs to be done shows what is possible through effective global partnership," said **Juergen Voegelé of the World Bank**. "The panel's top priorities build naturally from the GPO's objectives of healthy oceans and poverty alleviation and their recommendations will make this partnership strategic in how and where it works."

"This is a critical time in history," said **panelist Tuiloma Neroni Slade, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum**. "All levels of society and all stakeholders need to combine in joint action as a response to this very global problem."

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About the Blue Ribbon Panel: Convened by the World Bank, the Blue Ribbon Panel comprises leaders from 16 countries, representing government, the private sector, civil society organizations, academia, and multi-lateral institutions. The Panel was tasked with providing recommendations to the Global Partnership for Oceans on the principles and practices for prioritizing and implementing sustainable ocean investment. For more information on the Blue Ribbon Panel, please visit: <http://www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org/blue-ribbon-panel>.

About the Global Partnership for Oceans: The GPO is a new and powerful approach to restoring ocean health. It mobilizes finance and knowledge to activate proven solutions at an unprecedented scale for the benefit of communities, countries and global well-being. The GPO is now a growing alliance of over 140 governments, international organizations, civil society groups, and private sector interests committed to addressing the threats to the health, productivity and resilience of the ocean. It aims to tackle widely documented problems of overfishing, pollution, and habitat loss. For more information on the Global Partnership for Oceans, please visit: <http://www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org>.