

FORUM: The General Assembly

QUESTION OF: Preventing the extinction of coastal marine ecosystems in Africa and Asia

SUBMITTED BY: Ivory Coast

SPONSOR: Kuwait, Ivory Coast

SIGNATORIES: South Africa, Singapore, Australia, Italy, Germany, Japan, Canada, Thailand, Iran, Peru, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden

CO-SUBMITTED BY: Kuwait

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

Affirming that finding new sustainable fishing methods helps not only the overfishing issue but also the livelihoods of the locals in Africa who depend on fish as their food, jobs, income,

Declaring that it is crucial to find a viable solution to the issues in the Bay of Bengal and other areas, made possible by funding from Kuwait and other countries,

Recognizing the concept of Aquaculture and fish farming can be useful when finding solutions to the overfishing problems in Africa and Asia,

Keeping in mind that plastic pollution is a major threat to the oceans specifically to marine life, addressing the issue is vital and can be done in several ways such as improving solid waste management, building circular economies, and encouraging clean-up,

Taking note that the destruction of Mangrove Forests is a vital topic to cover and find ways to conserve, not only for the ecosystem but also for the people who depend on marine life for their livelihood,

Further recalling it is important to understand the way the ocean works in order to protect it, specifically with the coral reefs, so the conference must take initiative to find ways to conserve and grow coral reefs,

Convinced there are several useful management suggestions such as controlling when and where fishing can occur, using non-harmful fishing equipment such as biodegradable fishing nets, adopting proper managing practices to aquaculture, and properly treating and containing sewage and waste,

Noting further that in order to conserve essential wildlife regulations (ex to prevent illegal fishing) must be put in place, along with properly educating those involved, and resources must be provided to the local community in order to fund and carry out these policies,

Fully believing that workshops or other forms of communication to local communities affected are a great way to spread knowledge on the importance of conservation which will then inspire action to protect and sustain these ecosystems,

Having considered further species such as the Leatherback Sea Turtle are essential to marine ecosystems and must be protected, policies for endangered marine life must be put in place particularly ones that protect habitat and hunting/fishing regulations,

Acknowledging the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water) already in place to try to create stable, healthy marine ecosystems by 2030,

Emphasizing the severity of the threat to coastal marine ecosystems: 65% of all coastal ecosystems in Africa and Asia are in danger,

Noting that the main cause of the decline in the health of coastal marine ecosystems are due to human activity, such as overfishing, pollution, disruptive tourism, and climate change,

Recalling that Côte d'Ivoire's coastal environments are extremely vulnerable due to illegal poaching and overfishing, and that the biodiversity has greatly suffered,

Reinforcing that global warming is a major contributor to the decreased biodiversity in coastal marine ecosystems; as the oceans absorb the increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the water composition becomes more acidic, killing organisms,

Realizing that one in three fish stocks are currently being overfished, which disrupts the natural food chain of the ecosystems, leading to the decreased populations of predators and larger organisms,

Understanding the ocean provides many economic opportunities, and generates 2.5 trillion dollars globally annually, so healthy oceans help to keep economies strong and jobs reliable,

1. Draws the attention to overfishing and illegal fishing issues in Africa and Asia by forming a branch called the Fishing Laws and Policies Association (FLPA) of the Sustainable Development Commission of the UN that will:
 - a. reinforce previously established laws and restrictions in the coastal areas of Africa and Asia
 - b. add any more restrictions that may be needed such as what time of year and who can fish when which will depend on the region (species, season)
 - i. those who can fish include: local fishermen (who fish small amounts just to provide for their family and sell at local markets).
 - ii. government and UN approved fishing companies
 - c. establish a set schedule for any legal fishing companies and persons to follow in order for the fish to be able to reproduce and sustain in a stable and healthy manner;
2. Approves of specific restrictions that will be put in place in all environmental instances related which include
 - a. banning of entering area which include fishing areas and mangrove forests
 - b. a country will have restrictions on selling the amount of fish products, it must go down to 50% if the population of fish that are being fished is dangerously reduced
3. Declares accordingly that if there is corruption in the local country's systems enforcing environmental policies methods will be used to prevent such corruption which will include a structured voting system where the FLPA in regards to the UN will vote on if rules are being followed;
4. Further recommends that methods such as Aquaculture and fish farming to be used in areas in Africa and Asia that are losing certain species of fish such as the Madeiran sardine and the Cassava Croaker to endangerment due to overfishing, particularly fish that is consumed by the local people and sold to other countries;
5. Requests a greater influence on the Mangrove deforestation issue, particularly in coastal ecosystems in Africa and Asia by:
 - a. providing background checks conducted by the FLPA to all companies and persons attempting to cut down these trees, ensuring that it is legal and only done when necessary
 - i. even so, companies that cut down trees will then be required to plant double the amount of trees cut down in order to maintain a sustainable environment
 - ii. these companies will need to fund their own actions of replanting trees
 - b. establishing wildlife and nature preserves all around the two regions where Mangroves are most endangered, ensuring that these forests are protected at all times
 - i. building fencing around the land designated to the Mangrove natural reserves
 - ii. have watch stations along the fences with watchguards to only allow those who are coming to plant Mangroves to enter
 - iii. keep surveillance along the fence using cameras

- c. using funding from the IMF to regrow Mangrove forests where previous trees had been cut down to enable the ecosystem to return to its former sustainable self;
- 6. Supports the formation of workshops and other means of educating people in the regions of Africa and Asia on:
 - a. the importance of coastal ecosystems
 - b. methods on sustainably fishing for both the local peoples economy and nature
 - c. ways to prevent the fragile ecosystems from being destroyed by human activities;
- 7. Takes note of the environmental impacts on the local economy, particularly the jobs and incomes of citizens and in response
 - a. under the FLPA and UN administration provide several new job options to those in danger of losing a steady income which may include
 - i. sustainable fisherman who will be taught by FLPA and UN on proper fishing methods and providing more environmentally friendly materials to fish such as biodegradable fishing nets
 - ii. Fish farmer/worker in aquaculture, processor, packager
 - iii. local planter of Mangroves who will be hired by UN to replant Mangrove forests in threatened areas
 - iv. clean up force who will be tasked to clean up coastlines and bodies of water nearby through UN and FLPA;
- 8. Notes the importance of protecting all endangered wildlife species in the regions and in turn suggests
 - a. working with wildlife protection agencies and hiring them through the UN to travel to African and Asian coastlines to do their work
 - b. establish rehabilitation centers for orphaned or abandoned sea creatures
 - c. once the wildlife is nourished back to health, they will be released back into the wild in areas that are off-limits for fishing
 - i. these wild areas will be located on the coastlines in areas that can be routinely examined and watched
 - ii. this includes: bays, oceans, seas, and rivers such as the Bay of Bengal
 - iii. also, it will be secured and kept away from “dead zones” which are zones that have minimal access to oxygen and cannot support microbial processes that remove nitrogen from the ocean;
- 9. Promotes the spread and investment of ecotourism, a form of tourism that is intended to spread awareness about suffering environments and to help preserve them
 - a. there has been a switch to more sustainable methods of tourism along Côte d'Ivoire's coastline, and it has proven to greatly benefit the local sea turtle populations
 - i. not only has this benefited the local coastlines, but it also boosts local economies and improves the standard of living
 - ii. with ecotourism as a new industry, there is less of a reliance on destructive sectors such as fishing
 - b. possible ways to promote ecotourism include supporting and advertising for tourism activities or companies that have sustainable recycling practices and educate visitors about the local ecosystems, or to create more protected areas that are only accessible to tourists to observe natural environments
 - i. the UNEP can support governments in seeking to implement more wildlife sanctuaries along the coasts of countries'
 - ii. banning foraging and fishing in these areas can be extremely beneficial to help populations recover and thrive alongside benevolent tourists;

10. Encourages the building of artificial coral reefs to reinforce the current reefs that face threats from overfishing and pollution
 - a. coral reefs are hotspots for biodiversity, so recreating the ecosystems that have already been lost may help the environment recover
 - i. indigenous cultures in the Indo-Pacific have used palm-leaf and bamboo structures for thousands of years to stimulate the growth of coral and the attraction of marine life
 - ii. concrete has been proven to be an extremely effective material for the foundation of artificial reefs, as coral can latch on due to the texture and thrive
 - b. the United Nations can assist in the building of these artificial reefs, but it would be paid for and supported by the surrounding countries
 - i. the reefs would benefit the surrounding countries as they can be used for tourism
 - ii. they will also attract fish and other marine life which, in moderation, can boost the fishing industry;

11. Considers the investment in new mineral accretion devices that can promote the growth of coral along the ocean floor, and attract fish species
 - a. this starts with typical rebar being laid across the ocean floor, and then low electrical currents pass through, causing an effect called electrolysis
 - i. this causes the precipitation of minerals and they collect on the metal, and this will accelerate the growth of coral by 3 to 5 times
 - ii. Coral Aid is working to develop this technology even further, and make it even more effective
 - b. the UN fifth committee of the general assembly will fund these projects;

12. Regrets that pollution is a major cause of the diminished biodiversity of coastal ecosystems
 - a. large corporations are the biggest offenders, as they generate large quantities of trash that eventually end up in the oceans
 - i. stricter policies will encourage them to recycle and change to sustainable energy sources such as wind and solar to limit the amount of oil spills that occur
 - ii. provide incentives for recycling and discounts for sustainable energy to encourage companies to switch.

13. Supports countries in creating stricter fishing laws and requirements in order to protect populations from becoming too overtaxed;
 - a. Update the UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) to suggest stricter punishments for overfishing, as it affects the global community;
 - i. Populations of fish will have different limits, so the UN officials that are environmental experts will determine the health of the species annually;
 - ii. Recommends punishments for individuals will vary, according to severity and local policies, and will mainly include fines;
 - b. Create more areas where recreational fishing is illegal, and commercial fishing can occur but only with a license and governmental inspections;

i. This will ensure that all the fishermen are registered and following the rules set;

ii. Also create more zones where commercial fishing is illegal, and recreational fishing is permitted;

c. Implement fishing seasons based around typical mating cycles of populations to ensure that fishing only occurs when the population is at its strongest;

i. This will allow communities to recover from the fishing season uninterrupted during their mating season;

ii. Many countries already have this policy, so experts would determine more specific seasons for fishing and stricter punishments;