



MEETING BRIEF

How Can Maritime Governance Advance the SDGs?

Oceans and seas have long been vital for countries' national security and economic growth. While numerous conflicts have emerged between states due to maritime disputes over underwater resources and territorial claims, many of today's challenges involve non-state actors and are transnational in nature. Maritime issues—such as piracy; smuggling; illicit wildlife trade; illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; and trafficking in humans, arms, and drugs—can have a destabilizing effect offshore as well as onshore.

In the lead up to this year's Our Ocean Conference, hosted by Indonesia, the International Peace Institute, One Earth Future (OEF), and the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the UN co-organized a policy workshop on February 21, 2018, examining the nexus between the crosscutting issue of maritime security and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 14 and 16. The following are the key takeaways from this event:

1. Efforts to tackle maritime issues need a holistic vision and a whole-of-society approach. Governments and relevant stakeholders, including regional organizations, would benefit from taking a more inclusive approach and engaging with local communities for a bottom-up solution. There is a need for structural integration to connect security and development actors.
2. Maritime security has multiple, diverse components, including food and economic security. As a result, governments' efforts to build security in their maritime spaces will benefit from a holistic approach that considers sustainability. Demonstrating the linkages between stability and sustainable development, with accompanying cost-benefit analyses, could incentivize states to invest in maritime security and develop their blue economy to improve their food supply and economic well-being. There is a need to enhance capacities of developing countries, including small island developing states, to address maritime security and boost economic development through international cooperation.
3. Increasing public awareness about challenges to maritime security is key to tackling these issues. A global marketing campaign, in partnership with the private sector, to reveal the impact of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing on issues such as labor abuses, conservation, sex trafficking, and climate change could be one such approach. To maximize visibility, this campaign can involve celebrities and educational institutions and highlight member-state "champions" on the issue.

4. Improving maritime security and governance requires measuring progress and tracking commitments. This provides an opportunity for cross-sectoral collaboration among different government entities, civil society organizations, the UN, and other international organizations to coordinate their activities in a comprehensive manner while providing a feedback loop for collecting reliable and comprehensive data. It also provides a channel for sharing information and best practices on maritime governance. OEF's Stable Seas Maritime Security Index is an example of such an effort to measure and map a range of threats in different areas.
5. In order to bridge the silos between efforts on maritime security and sustainable development that can bolster food and economic security, stakeholders should capitalize on upcoming opportunities such as the 2018 Our Ocean Conference in Indonesia. Another avenue for enhanced momentum is the 2019 UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will focus, inter alia, on SDG 16. Bringing the issue of maritime instability into policy discussions at UN headquarters from the perspective of sustainable development can encourage buy-in from member states.

Please contact Oceans Beyond Piracy at gclough@obp.ngo if you are interested in continued dialogue and engagement on this topic.