



# World Ocean Assessment I

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Implementing the Ocean SDG: from knowledge  
to action

IDDRI





## History of WOA

- 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development recommended a “Regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects”
- The UN General Assembly consequently agreed on a process to produce:
  - an integrated assessment of the ocean
  - agreed priority cross-cutting thematic issues such as food security
  - focus on a baseline for future global assessments.



## Structure of the Process

- **UN Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole**
  - Oversight body of the UN for the Regular Process
    - Set Terms of Reference and Working Methods,
      - including nomination of Experts and approval of drafting teams
    - Adopted chapter outline of the first global integrated assessment
    - Scoped OUT policy analysis for FIRST assessment
- **Group of Experts of the Regular Process (23/18)**
- **Pool of Experts (~800 / 280)**
- **WORLD OCEAN ASSESSMENT PRESENTED TO AHWGW – SEPTEMBER 8-11, 2015**
  - Paragraphs drafted for Omnibus OLS Resolution 2015



## Structure of WOA I

- Part 1 – Summary
- Part 2 – History (4 chapters, 60 pages)
- Part 3 – Ecosystem Services (7 chapters, 150 pg)
- Part 4 – Ocean as a Source of Food (5 chapters; 150 pg)
- Part 5 – Other Human Uses (17 chapters, 350 pp)
- Part 6 – Marine Biodiversity (23 chapters, 550 pp)
  - Part A –Biodiversity Assessments ( Regional Overviews
  - Part B – Emergent Concerns; Habitats and Species Groups

Available after States “accept” it at UNGA





## 10 Emergent "Themes"

### **A. Manifold problems linked to climate change and linked issues**

- Complement not repeat IPCC work, add context

### **B. Marine biota – higher mortality, lower reproductive success**

- Lots of more specialized trends, but these are nearly global

### **C. Food security and safety is at risk**

- Addressed all three pillars of sustainability not just ecological

### **D. Biodiversity hotspots are magnets for human activities**

- Finding applies across socio-economic levels of development

### **E. Increased and conflicting demands for ocean space**

- Finding applies across scales of economies





## 10 “Emergent Themes”

### **F.Cumulative impacts are key issue**

- **Not being addressed on most scales of analysis and management**

### **G.Uneven distribution of benefits from the ocean**

- **Presented as a finding; implications out of scope of assessment**

### **H.Integrated management is essential – and that needs more and better information**

- **A reported finding in many chapters, not a recommendations**

### **I.Excessive inputs of harmful material**

- **Land-based sources strongly dominate but are atmospheric and marine sources**

### **J.Lack of knowledge about integration should not lead to delay in implementing known solutions**



## What did we learn?

- Nothing on the list of themes is really news
- Why all the fuss for documenting the known without accompanying policy analysis and recommendations?
- View like the first couple IPCC Reports. BEFORE THE WOA
  - The science is complex and uncertain, and international policy dialogue hampered by “dueling experts” partisan to diverse perspectives
- AFTER THE WOA
  - Mandate of Regular Process was directly from the United Nations
  - States participated fully in scoping the assessment and selecting the teams of experts
  - Full oversight during the Process and formal comment-seeking period
  - There is now ONE COMMON FACTUAL BASIS on which to structure policy debate: “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts.”