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Commission

Steering Group for the IOC Ocean Best Practices System (SG-OBPS)

Monthly Meeting
12 April 2023
12.00-13.00 UTC
[ONLINE]



UNESCO 2023

SG-OBPS-20230111
12 April 2023
English only

ABSTRACT

The IOC Ocean Best Practices System Steering Group (SG-OBPS) meets annually at a face-to-face/hybrid/online meeting. During the intervening months the SG-OBPS meets monthly online.

This report is the record of the online meeting for 12 April 2023

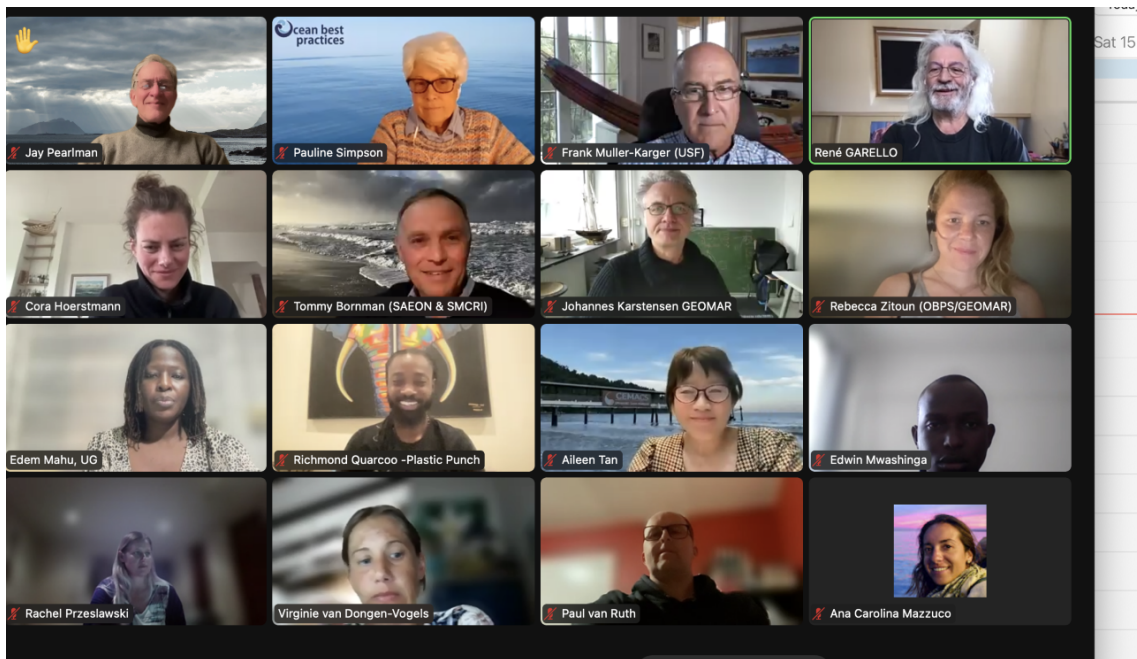
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ANNEX 1 - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



1. Opening of the meeting

Rene Garello (Co-Chair SG-OBPS) introduced the meeting by explaining that this SG was the second quarterly SG Panel Session for 2023. A complete list of the meeting participants is shown in Annex I. Apologies were received from Mark Bushnell; Emma Heslop; George Petihakis; Nicholas Roden' Cristian Munoz Mas; Juliet Hermes; Peter Pissierssens. All participants agreed the session should be recorded (see link to recording below).

2. Panel Session:

Moderator: Rene Garello

Rene Garello introduced this panel session and explained that whilst there is an understanding of the need for best practices (and standards) to be applied in research across the ocean value chain to achieve standardisation and interoperability, there is also an appreciation that regional differences in resources and capacities, limit compliance with best practices and standards. He looked forward to hearing the perspectives of the panel and their initiatives. This panel session was focussed on the growing activity in Africa.

The Panel Session topic was ***'How to approach "best practices" in Africa'***

The Meeting recording of the Panel Session is available at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xr84qmGtqzdH0qxNajVlYe7x-1MwA3KV/view?usp=share_link

Please access the recording to hear the full presentations and discussions. Short abstracts of the Panel members presentations are below:

Edem Mahu (University of Ghana, and a member of the SG-OBPS) explained that opportunities and also the many challenges in research in Africa, are very different and not experienced in other regions/sub-regions. To understand the research landscape in Africa - it is one continent but many different regions with varying capacities. The meeting also needed to know what barriers there are in each region to create and share best practices and she suggested developing partnerships across the Africa region. She noted there were not many users of the OBPS repository from Africa. She took the opportunity of discussing some of the citizen science projects practices which could be uploaded to OBPS. But there is a need for the region to create more awareness of OBPS services which provides visibility and discoverability of practices that are available for the region to adopt. She outlined advocacy opportunities to share information on OBPS and thought calls should be made to African areas that are not utilising OBPS.

Edwin Mwashinga (IOC Africa, Kenya, and a member of the SG-OBPS) started his perspective by confirming the OBPS vision and message. He suggested there were many best practices in Africa but the documenting and sharing were challenges. He identified the Mikoko Pamoja, Blue Carbon initiative in Kenya and others that were likely candidates to produce and share their practices. He suggested to improve the visibility of practices: create an African perspective where regional and sub-regional practices cannot be replicated at the global scale and vice versa, global scale practices cannot be repeated in Africa because: of the prohibitive high cost of equipment; developing practices on specific challenges and issues in the regions; providing the capacity development for these; and also providing capacity development on the creation, documenting and sharing of practices. He reminded that African indigenous knowledge is important to document and share and that practices for Africa needs, should be provided in languages other than English, (French, Portuguese, Arabic, Swahili etc.) [editors note: OBPS is investigating AI translation to address global multi-language needs]

Richmond Quarcoo (Plastic Punch Ghana); explained Plastic Punch is an NGO and he would show their citizen science approach based on what already exists. He displayed horrific beach trash images including plastics. He focussed on beach cleanups and showed some time series images where a cleanup within a couple of months had returned to its pre-cleanup state. He confirmed that the trash is all deposited onto the beach by the sea. The data collection is based on the OSPA protocol and he explained that the detail required in this protocol was not possible with the volume of the trash deposited. Instead, each volunteer collects data on categories of trash for example, shoes, textiles etc and classifies plastics and non plastics. He displayed some telling metrics from 2019. They also collect data on brands and from that understand which company products are more responsible for the pollution. With that data they work with the local authorities on identifying how to manage the trash in the communities they serve. He is hopeful that a new policy and law will be adopted by Ghana by Dec 2023. This data is shared under the SDG 14.1 with the Ghana Statistical Service who pass on the data to global aggregators who require metric data reported - which can be problematic since they collect data as numbers of bottles etc and how can that be translated into kilograms. He explained local data had supported for example the implementation of local bottle recycling initiatives which had significantly reduced the numbers now found in the beach cleanups - data can indicate solutions!

Tommy Bornman (SAEON) explained that he is part of the *OBPS Task Team 22-01: Coastal Observations in Under-Resourced Countries* <https://www.oceanbestpractices.org/about/task-teams/task-team-22-01-coastal-observing-in-under-resourced-countries/> with as expected a big aim at Africa as well as the Pacific. This is the second year of the TT; they meet regularly every 2 weeks. The project has grown incredibly over the last two months and there is a lot of interest globally, not only for under-resourced countries but the drive now is for low cost open-source oceanographic instrumentation and sensors. The TT is collecting these interests from all over the World - the major one is their own 'Co-Lab in a Box, where low cost biogeochemical instrumentation get inserted into boxes and distributed; 'Gem in a Box' (Canada), 'GO-AN in a Box' all to transport instrumentation to the regions. He named the Backyard Boys a group producing open source CTD, ACDP etc. All are initiatives pursuing the provision of low cost instrumentation to do ocean observation in Africa. In 2022 there were two big workshops (Mozambique) attracted lot of interest globally and from Africa, and the second - GeoBlue Planet October, in Ghana with a lot of interest from West African scientists (he will share the workshop contacts with the OBPS African representatives) The focus of the last couple of months is 1) to find funding to have a larger African-wide workshop with as many stakeholders as possible (it may be necessary to split it into West and East Africa workshops) and 2) to finalise the set of equipment and create best practices for that set rather than create best practices for everything 'under the sun.' The focus is on a suite of instruments that can do all the basic monitoring - biological, chemical, oceanography etc including smart moorings, that are all available and which can be operated by anyone in Africa. There is awareness of the limitations of Africa - reliable internet, reliable data services etc and the calibration of instruments is a problem because there are no regional calibration centres so everything has to go overseas. The TT is looking to set up regional calibration centres so when the suite of instrumentation is spread throughout Africa there are calibration centres close by. The plan is co-design with everyone in Africa and most important is obtaining **sustainable funding**. There is a big need in Africa but also globally, for Africa to be inputting ocean observation data into global ocean models

4. Close of Meeting

Rene Garello thanked the panellists for their interesting presentations and for sharing their experiences, and to the participants for an interesting discussion.

The meeting closed at 14.25 UTC

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS [ONLINE]

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