

Current state of international governance on conservation and sustainable use of marine ecosystem services

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Conservation and sustainable use of marine ecosystem services has been discussed internationally. For instance, discussions on EBSA (Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas) are ongoing at meeting under the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). Likewise, the issues of VME (vulnerable marine ecosystem) are also discussed at FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). In addition, General Assembly Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction has been held by the United Nations in order to discuss the need for creating an international instrument under UNCLOS to address the issue of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction before the end of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (which is winter time in 2014).

The author has closely monitored the development of the discussions on the above meetings and found that their discussions were narrowly focused upon the control of fishing activities and they lacked considerations on the ecosystem services as a whole. This is most likely because stakeholder identifications, such as polluters and users of ecosystem services, are difficult and creating a legal framework is extremely hard. Under this situation, it can be argued that agreeing economical tools such as payment for ecosystem services would be more practical.

Keywords: Ecosystem services, UNCLOS, CBD, FAO, EBSA