

“Biodiversity governance on the high seas”

The French Global Environment Facility, along with the Agency for Marine Protected Areas, the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, and the Prince Albert II Foundation, organized a seminar on “biodiversity on the high seas” in Monaco on 20 and 21 March 2008.

Marine areas outside national jurisdictions (over 200 miles from coastlines) cover over 70% of the planet’s surface. Today a whole host of activities are developing: maritime transport, fishing, mine and biotechnological prospecting which together create increasing environmental risks. Risks relating to maritime transport and mine prospecting may be covered by international agreements (International Maritime Organization, International Seabed Authority) but this is not the case for living resources on the high seas which enjoy no protection mechanisms. The seminar aimed to come up with innovative suggestions on how to sustainably manage living resources on the high seas.

It gathered a number of prominent personalities from the sea world including Prince Albert II, the doctor and explorer J-L Etienne, legal experts on sea law and recognized maritime experts.

J-L Etienne, General Manager of the Albert 1st Foundation, L.Tubiana, Director of IDDRI and C. du Castel, representing FGEF, opened the seminar where the various debates led to recommendations on high seas fishing, bioprospecting and profit-sharing. The proposals will be presented and debated at the upcoming international meetings: Global Forum on Oceans (Hanoi, April 2008), Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Bonn, May 2008), IUCN World Congress (Barcelona, October 2008).