



World Commission  
on Environmental Law

Commission Mondiale de  
Droit de l'Environnement | Comisión Mundial  
de Derecho Ambiental

## Year in Review 2016

### Oceans, Coasts and Coral Reefs Specialist Group

**Co-Chairs: Nilufer Oral and David VanderZwaag**

The Oceans, Coasts and Coral Reefs Specialist Group, led by Co-Chairs Nilufer Oral and David VanderZwaag, had a productive year in 2016. Aside from events and projects in which the Specialist Group was involved, Co-Chairs and Members also authored numerous publications. Highlights include:

- The Co-Chairs, along with Specialist Group members Robin Warner and Kristina Gjerde, contributed papers relating to law of the sea and governance of areas beyond national jurisdiction which will be published in an upcoming book co-edited by Nilufer Oral, Harry Scheiber and M. Kwon, Ocean Law Debates: The 50 Year Legacy and Emerging Issues for the Years Ahead (Brill/Martinus Nijhoff, 2017). The papers were first presented at the Law of the Sea Institute's 50th Anniversary Conference convened by the University of California Berkeley Law School in October 2015 where the Oceans SG organized a panel of experts exploring global and regional challenges in addressing governance of marine biodiversity on the high seas.
- The Co-Chairs collaborated with the WCEL Chair in developing a panel program on "Biodiversity and Marine Ecosystems" for the World Environmental Law Congress in April 2016.
- The Group convened a successful workshop in collaboration with various IUCN units, "Governance of Marine Biodiversity in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction: Progressions and Challenges" at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i, September 2016. The Co-Chairs also served as panelists at the special Congress session, "The High Seas: Conserving the Earth's Final Frontier" organized by IUCN's Global Marine Programme.
- The Specialist Group was actively engaged in the United Nations Preparatory Committee process to develop an international legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The Co-chairs and Members contributed to an IUCN briefing paper on key options for a new agreement in preparation for the third session of the Prep Comm to be held 27 March-7 April 2017. Members of the SG also participated in the IUCN delegations to the first and second sessions of the Prep Comm in New York (28 March-8 April 2016 and 26 August-9 September 2016).