

“Indonesia's Maritime and Coastal Resources: Challenges and Opportunities”

An Open Forum with

Dr. James McVey
NOAA Former Chief Scientist

And

Michael Abbey
NOAA Fisheries Lead for Technical Capacity Building in Asia-Pacific

May 11, 2011

On May 11th, USINDO hosted Dr. James McVey, former Chief Scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and Michael Abbey, NOAA Fisheries Lead for Technical Capacity Building in Asia-Pacific for an Open Forum on maritime challenges and opportunities in Indonesia.

Abbey opened the forum by outlining NOAA's mandate and role in Indonesia. NOAA is the leading organization combating illegal unreported unregulated (IUU) fishing and working to mitigate catch of protected living marine resources through capacity building internationally. Through the International Capacity Assistance Program, Abbey works with countries including Indonesia to protect their resources and publishes reports on countries falling short of their

international duties to preserve their maritime resources.

The program, in existence since 2007, has published two reports, in both of which Indonesia has not been mentioned as an offending country, but has been close. If NOAA deems countries irresponsible, Congress can vote to implement trade sanctions.

In addition to this program, NOAA is engaged with the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), a program launched in 2009 to protect the biodiversity and resources of the coral triangle which includes the ocean in between the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Malaysia, and Indonesia. In cooperation with CTI, NOAA works to build capacity in Indonesia to protect against illegal fishing and to implement

sustainable management of various reef fishes.

Abbey stressed the importance of maritime resources to Indonesia. Marine resources extraction and related activities account for 30% of the Coral Triangle's member countries' employment. Also, Indonesia is the 11th biggest fish exporting country, accounting for 2 % of the total fish exports in the world, valued at \$2.66 billion. However, Indonesia loses an additional \$2 billion to illegal fishing each year.

Areas of concern for Indonesia include the limited number of trained staff working on marine issues, the limited management plans for resources and fisheries, the lack of value added to resources extracted in country, and the targeting of endangered sharks and turtles. Abbey expressed hope for increased cooperation and integration with NOAA to better understand the challenges and opportunities for marine resources in Indonesia.

Dr. McVey spoke on marine aquaculture as a tool for coral reef management, food security, and economic development in Indonesia. He pointed out that in Indonesia, large segments of the population have shifted from farming and other professions to fishing despite the low wages in fishing (about \$600 – 700 a year). The low wages and pressure to yield big catches has led in increased overfishing and dynamite fishing, which is not sustainable.

McVey recommended managing coral reef ecosystems by integrating the management of wild fishery resources, environmental quality, marine

aquaculture, marine protected areas, enforcement, and social education and training programs. McVey encouraged the various groups, including NOAA, CTI, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and USAID working toward the same goal of coral reef management, to increase communication and cooperation.

In conclusion, he asserted that offshore aquaculture can meet the protein and economic needs of the community while creating jobs at the farm site, processing plant, feed plants, rendering plants, and distribution centers. Ultimately, aquaculture is a sustainable solution to protecting marine resources and alleviating poverty.