

## A 'Tropical Majority' perspective on ocean sustainability

Una perspectiva de 'Mayoría Tropical' sobre la sostenibilidad de los océanos

Le point de vue de la 'Majoritéropicale' sur la durabilité des océans

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### EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Globally, the tropics are home to most of the world's biodiversity and to most of the people whose cultures and livelihoods are closely tied to and depend on healthy marine environments. We call this majority of directly ocean-dependent people the 'tropical majority'. Despite the important local ocean-specific science, perspectives, and knowledge held by the tropical majority; most funding, governance, and education institutions are in high-income nations outside of the tropics. Unfortunately, this undermines the equity and effectiveness of current solutions to pressing marine environmental challenges and hinders leadership opportunities by the tropical majority. To counter this imbalance and achieve more equitable and effective ocean futures for people and nature, during my talk I will propose and discuss four tangible actions that can influence a vision for more sustainable fisheries: 1. Center equity in ocean governance, 2. Reconnect people and the ocean, 3. Redefine ocean literacy, and 4. Decolonize ocean science (inclusive of social and natural sciences).

Dr. Spalding is the Founding Director of the Adrienne Arsht Community-Based Resilience Solutions Initiative and Staff Scientist at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI); and affiliated as Associate Professor at Oregon State University. Dr. Spalding has an applied interdisciplinary social science background in economics, marine affairs and policy, and environmental studies; and approximately 20 years of applied experience in international development, conservation, and environmental consulting in Panama and the US. Broadly, her research group studies drivers of global change, impacts of that change on the most vulnerable communities, and what we as a society can do to better respond to those changes and impacts.

**KEYWORDS:** Ocean Sustainability, Marine conservation, fisheries, stakeholder engagement