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## Outtakes

By Brian Lin

## Reflections on academic life

### A close encounter with a prince

**What is it like to have one of the most famous people in the world not only know your work, but cite it in front of the movers and shakers in your field?**

UBC fisheries economist Rashid Sumaila knows that feeling first-hand after Charles, the Prince of Wales, mentioned his research on harmful government fisheries subsidies at a meeting with about 60 representatives from the United Nation, the World Bank, academia and the private sector.

Sumaila was joined by fellow UBC fisheries professor Daniel Pauly and economics professor emeritus Gordon Munro at a March 2010 workshop hosted by Prince Charles at St. James Palace. They were among only eight academics invited to provide feedback on Prince Charles's efforts to protect the world's oceans through the Prince's Charities' International Sustainability Unit (ISU).

Over one and a half days, the participants reviewed the ISU's Draft Consultative Document, provided feedback and explored opportunities for collaboration across sectors. The Prince then met with subgroups and gave closing remarks.

"In his closing remarks he mentioned our subsidies work, saying: 'It's really unfortunate that the world is paying \$16 billion of bad subsidies a year to overfish, and in the process losing out on \$50 billion annually in potential economic benefits,'" recalls Sumaila.

"Then he called us out! He said: 'Scientists in this very room made this estimate.'"

Then came the close encounter.

During subgroup discussions, Prince Charles remarked to Sumaila, Pauly and Munro: "You guys are doing the subsidies work. This is really good material."

"Tell me," the Prince pressed, "which countries are causing the biggest problems? If you tell me, we'll invite them to the Palace and we'll have a chat."

Sumaila is no stranger to rubbing shoulders with royalty. He attended a similar event with Prince Albert II of Monaco in 2008. But if he had to pick favourites, Sumaila says, the British prince wins out for doing his homework.

"Both of them care a lot about the environment," says Sumaila. "In terms of depth of knowledge, Prince Charles clearly came out ahead.

"He was quite humble, really open to learn and share his knowledge. I saw in him a great champion in helping humanity avert further depletion of ocean fish resources."

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Prince Charles (far left) with Rod Fujita (left) of the Environmental Defense Fund, California Researcher Rashid Sumaila (right). Photograph courtesy of Rashid Sumaila

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