United Nations Decade on Biadiversity

6 June 2014

Dear Ms. Goettsche-Wanli,

Reference is made to the letter of Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel dated 3 April 2014, inviting the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to provide input to the Secretary-General’s Report on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, which will be submitted to the

Annex. Information on other relevant developments within the Convention on Biological Diversity relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea

INTRODUCTION

1. Building upon the contribution to Part I of the Secretary-General’s Report on Oceans and the Law
of the Sea sent by the CBD Secretariat on 31 January 2014, this note consists of brief descriptions of the work carried out under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in the following areas related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea: (i) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; (ii) ecologically or biologically significant marine areas; (iii) threats to marine and coastal biodiversity; and (iv) tools and capacity development.

2. This contribution includes a detailed description of the work carried out under the CBD, within the
framework of the elaborated Programme of Work on marine and coastal biological diversity (annex I to decision VIL/5), related to the ocean affairs and the law of the sea, as well as an executive summary of the full contribution, as per the guidance provided.

3. Executive Summary

There has been significant work under the Convention on Biological Diversity with regards to marine and coastal biodiversity, in response to specific requests from the CBD Conference of the Parties, with a view to supporting Parties in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The work of the CBD Secretariat aims to support science-based decision-making in conservation
and sustainable use, including through its work in facilitating the description of ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs). Through convening a series of nine regional workshops, held in collaboration with Parties and various global and regional partners, the CBD’s EBSA process has compiled a substantial amount of scientific information in describing over 200 areas meeting the EBSA criteria around the world. The EBSA process has facilitated the sharing of scientific information, networking of experts across disciplines, and enhanced collaboration for marine conservation and sustainable use, with the goal of supporting the efforts of Parties and relevant organizations in working towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity

The Secretariat has also been focusing efforts on improving the understanding of major threats to marine biodiversity and identifying practical means to mitigate the impacts of these threats. This work, which has focused on ocean acidification, underwater noise, coral bleaching, and marine debris, has come in the form of convening expert workshops, producing scientific synthesis reports, and compiling the views and experiences of Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations with a view to supporting actions to address these threats.

Additionally, the Secretariat has been conducting activities related to marine spatial planning (MSP) with the goal of supporting the development of consolidated practical guidance for Parties and other Governments in applying MSP, building upon existing guidance. This includes the organization of a forthcoming expert workshop on MSP, the compiling the views and experiences of Parties, other Govemments, and relevant organizations, and collaborating with UNEP in the development of an information-sharing mechanism for MSP.

The Secretariat has also undertaken capacity development efforts through the development of EBSA training materials and facilitating the undertaking of capacity building activities within the framework of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SQl). SOT facilitates information-sharing, communication, training, and technical assistance to enhance capacity towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity

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Targets through global partnerships among a wide range of partners at the global, regional, national and local levels.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020 AND THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

4. The vision of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, which was adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 10th meeting in 2010 (COP 10), is that “by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.” The Strategic Plan aims to achieve this vision through twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets which provide guidance on the measures and enabling conditions needed to improve conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including marine and coastal biodiversity. During COP 10, Parties committed to review, and as appropriate update and revise, their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), in line with the Strategic Plan. In light of this decision, the CBD Secretariat, with the support of the Japan Biodiversity Fund, organized a series of sub-regional workshops to assist Parties to revise their NBSAPs and to include national targets. In addition, in 2013 a global workshop was organized to review the revision process (http:Ilwww.cbd. inilnbsap/workshops/global/default.shtml). As of June 2013, over 130 Parties eligible for assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the Financial Mechanism of the CBD, have initiated the process of accessing and using GEF Enabling Activity (EA) funds, and other funds, to facilitate this process of updating NBSAPs, in addition to developing their 5th National Reports and strengthening their Clearing House Mechanisms (CHMs).

Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity

5. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets together provide a coherent vision for a sustainable future for
global biodiversity as a whole, but there are a number of Aichi Biodiversity Targets that are especially relevant to marine and coastal biodiversity, as follows:

(a) Aichi Biodiversity Target 6: By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are
managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits;

(b) Aichi Biodiversity Target 8: By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been
brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity;

(c) Aichi Biodiversity Target 9: By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified
and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment;

(d) Aichi Biodiversity Target 10: By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral
reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning; and

(e) Aichi Biodiversity Target 11: By 2020, at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas,
especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

Other relevant Aichi Biodiversity Targets

6. In addition, the targets under Goal A address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society through public awareness (Target 1),

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integration of biodiversity values into national planning and accounting (Target 2), reform of incentives (Target 3), and sustainable production and consumption (Target 4) are especially relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity.

ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS
(further information available at

Regional workshopsfor describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs)

7. Pursuant to COP decisions X129 and XL/17, the following regional workshops to facilitate the
description of EBSAs have been convened by the Executive Secretary in collaboration with a wide range of governments and organizations:

(a) Western South Pacific (Nadi, Fiji, 22 to 25 November 2011);’

(b) Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic (Recife, Brazil, 28 February to 2 March
2012);2

(c) Southern Indian Ocean (Flic en Flac, Mauritius, 31 July to 3 August 20l2);

(d) Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific (Galapagos, Ecuador, 28 to 31 August 2012);

(e) North Pacific (Moscow, Russian Federation, 25 February to 1 March 20l3);

(f) South-Eastern Atlantic (Swakopmund, Namibia, 8 to 12 April 2013);6

(g) Arctic (Helsinki, Finland, 3 to 7 March 2014);

(h) North-West Atlantic (Montreal, Canada, 24 to 28 March 2014);8 and

(i) Mediterranean (Malaga, Spain, 7 to 11 April 20l4).

8. These regional workshops have facilitated the description of 207 areas meeting the EBSA criteria
(annex I to decision XIJ2O). The results of the Western South Pacific regional workshop and the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic regional workshop were considered by the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting (COP 11) and, pursuant to decision X1117, the summary reports on the description of areas that meet the criteria for EBSAs, prepared by the Subsidiary Body at its sixteenth meeting, were submitted to the United Nations General Assembly as well as its relevant working groups, by means of a letter from the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.’° The results of the subsequent regional workshops will be discussed at the forthcoming 18hh1 meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 18) prior to the l2tI meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD.

9. Description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria is underway in the North-East Atlantic by OSPAR
Commission and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission. Additional workshops are being planned for the North-East Indian Ocean, the North-West Indian Ocean and for East Asian Seas. Further workshops may be organized for other regions where Parties request them, in line with decision XL/1 7. Moreover, as

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2 Report and documentation available at http://www.cbdintldoc/?meeting=RWEBSA-WCAR-Ol.
Report and documentation available at
Report and documentation available at htp//www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-ETTP-0i.
Report and documentation available at http://wwwcbd.int/doc/?inecting=EBSA-NP-01.
6 Report and documentation available at
Report and documentation available at http:/fwww.chd. intldoc/’?meeting=EBSAWS-20 I 4-01.
8 Report and documentation available at http://www.cbd.indoc/?meeting=EBSAWS-20 14-02. Report and documentation available at

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UNGA document A167/838 available at

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recognized in decision XJJ 17, additional workshops for the further description of areas already described may be held where new information becomes available, subject to the availability of financial resources.

EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism

10. Pursuant to decisions X129 and X1117, the Executive Secretary established a repository and
information-sharing mechanism for scientific and technical information and experience related to the application of the scientific criteria for EBSAs. The repository and information-sharing mechanism were developed through the financial support from the Government of Germany, in collaboration with Parties and other Governments, and relevant organizations, in particular those involved in the organization of the regional workshops for the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria.

11. The EBSA repository contains:

(a) Reports on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, prepared by the Subsidiary
Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice for the purpose set out in COP decisions X/29 and X1117, that the Conference of the Parties has requested the Executive Secretary to include in the repository as source of information for Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations; and

(b) Scientific and technical information and experience relating to the application of the
scientific criteria for EBSAs, or of other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria in areas within national jurisdiction, which Parties and other Governments have provided for inclusion in the repository, consistent with paragraph 18 of COP decision X1117.

12. The EBSA information-sharing mechanism includes:

(a) Reports prepared by the Subsidiary Body consistent with paragraph 12 of COP
decision X1117;

(b) The results of the regional workshops convened pursuant to COP decisions X129
(paragraph 36) and X1117 (paragraph 12);

(c) Scientific and technical information and experience relating to the application of the
criteria for EBSAs or other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria in areas within national jurisdiction that Parties and other Governments have provided for inclusion in information sharing mechanism, consistent with paragraph 18 of decision X1117;

(d) Other relevant scientific and technical information related to the areas described to meet
the EBSA criteria; and

(e) Links with similar initiatives, such as FAO’s work on vulnerable marine ecosystems
(decision X129, paragraph 39).

13. Tn order to increase the accessibility to the information contained in the EBSA repository and
information-sharing mechanism as described above, the EBSA portal website
was developed as a gateway to the EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism. The EBSA portal website thus aims to facilitate the use of available scientific and technical information related to areas meeting the EBSA criteria by a wide range of stakeholders, and to convey the outcomes of the regional workshops on description of EBSAs in a clearly understandable way. It also intends to improve general understanding about the EBSA process, facilitate participation in future regional/subregional EBSA workshops, and promote the application of the EBSA criteria at the national

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15. Pursuant to COP decision X1117, the development of further training materials on the use of traditional knowledge in the application of the

Systematic review on the impacts of ocean acidification Pursuant tom.0 nt

25. Pursuant to decision XL! 18, the Executive Secretary to the Convention is convening an expert workshop from 9 to 11 September 2014 in Montreal, Canada, to provide consolidated practical guidance and a toolkit for marine spatial planning, building upon existing guidance,”