

UN Environment-Contribution to SG report on oceans and the law of the sea

A. Major developments since the last reporting period

In relation to para 266 and 268 of the Resolution

UN Environment works with the International **Coral Reef** Initiative and other partners in implementing

UN Environment, working with partners, has published tools that enable consideration of future exposure to bleaching, inherent resilience of a coral reef, as well as human factors eroding their resilience in management planning. Statistically downscaled climate model projections for future coral bleaching conditions, available on Environment Live <https://environmentlive.unep.org/theme/index/19>. Findings have been published in a journal article (van Hooidonk et al 2016 Nature Scientific Reports <https://www.nature.com/articles/srep39666> <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/22048>), which includes some guidance on use of

https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22046/Guide_Coral_Reef_Resilience.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y). **(Capacity-building initiatives)**

2. Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)

The Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) is a regional intergovernmental policy forum and the sole decision-making body for the East Asian Seas Action Plan. COBSEA supports the

(Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam) in the development and protection of the marine environment and coastal areas of East Asian Seas. The COBSEA Secretariat is hosted by Thailand and administered by UN Environment, located at the UN Environment Asia and the Pacific Office in Bangkok, Thailand.

COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018-2022 were adopted at the Second Extraordinary IGM of COBSEA 25-26 April 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. Under these Strategic Directions COBSEA will focus on regional governance; addressing land-based marine pollution with a particular focus on nutrients, sediment, wastewater and marine litter; and marine and coastal planning and management, with a particular focus on ecosystem-based management approaches, including MPAs and MSP, towards achievement of relevant SDGs and Aichi Targets. An SDG implementation outlook focusing on these substantive priorities of COBSEA will be developed in 2018.

The COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter 2008 remains the only intergovernmentally adopted framework for addressing marine litter in the region. A process to update this Regional Marine Litter Action Plan is underway, to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose and fully reflect priorities identified e.g. in UN Environment Assembly Resolutions 1/6, 2/11 and 3/7 as well as the 2030 Development Agenda and SDGs. A first draft of the revision was considered by the Second Extraordinary Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA in April 2018, prepared based on consultation with participating countries, other stakeholders and desk review. At that meeting, participating countries agreed steps towards finalization of the revised action plan. A decision on the revised COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter will be made at the 24th Intergovernmental Meeting in 2019.

COBSEA and UN Environment are developing a regional project on reducing marine litter through management of the plastic value chain (USD 6.5M). The inception phase of the project is expected to commence in Q3 2018. The project will support countries implement key provisions of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, including in relation to and in doing so also facilitate development, planning and implementation of national commitments made in the context of the global Clean Seas campaign and voluntary commitments related to SDG 14.1.

3. Northwest Pacific Region (Northwest Pacific Action Plan)

NOWPAP member states Japan, P.R. China, R. Korea, and the Russian Federation adopted the NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2023 in principle. The strategy provides a roadmap for further development of the mechanism with a focus on ecosystem-based integrated coastal and river basin management, assessment of the state of the marine and coastal environment, land- and sea-based pollution prevention and reduction, and conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity. NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023 is a major milestone

MTS further strengthens

supported on monitoring, inventory and assessment of biodiversity with focus on endangered and threatened species, non-indigenous species and key habitats. Work is continuing for the successful implementation of the MoU between UNEP/MAP and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); close collaboration is enhanced to achieve SDG 14, including on issues such as the Sub-Regional Pilot Study for the Eastern Mediterranean on Non-Indigenous Species in Relation to Fisheries. **(Capacity building initiatives)**

Furthermore, COP 20 adopted the Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents (Decision IG.23/11) as well as updated Guidelines on Management of Dredged Materials (Decision IG.23/12) and updated Guidelines on the Management of Desalination Activities (Decision IG.23/13).

MAP is implementing with the support of the EU-funded Marine Litter MED project, key measures on marine litter as provided for in the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. In addition, partnerships were strengthened through the organization of the second meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter (November 2017) during which a joint workplan was agreed. The Secretariat is also participating in the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics as provided for by the UNEA3 resolution on marine litter and plastic. Coordination is ongoing with the other European Regional Seas for the implementation of the Regional Action Plans on Marine Litter; MAP is also supporting the Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat to develop a Monitoring Programme and an Action Plan on Marine Litter based on the Mediterranean experience. **(Capacity building initiatives)**

Efforts to achieve universal ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols continue. Since May 2017, the following instruments of ratification or accession have been deposited: (a) the instrument of ratification of the ICZM Protocol by Lebanon; dated 1 August 2017; the Protocol entered into force for Lebanon on 31 August 2017; (b) the instrument of accession to the Prevention and Emergency Protocol by Lebanon, dated 3 November 2017; the Protocol entered into force for Lebanon on 3 December 2017; and (c) the instrument of ratification of the Offshore Protocol by Croatia, dated 8 February 2018; the Protocol entered into force for Croatia on 10 March 2018.

5. Nairobi Convention Secretariat

common understanding of Marine Spatial Planning necessary to support the implementation of sustainable resource use planning in the Western Indian Ocean region through exploring different applications of marine spatial planning and sharing of marine spatial planning experiences. A follow-up training is planned for late 2018. Through UNEP-WCMC, the training also delved into Area Based Planning Tools for Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) as part of implementation of the project on Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep-sea Living Marine Resources and Ecosystems in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. On 15 November 2017, a session by IUCN presented to the western Indian Ocean countries the results of the Seamounts project and the Marine Spatial Atlas for the Western Indian Ocean project. **(Capacity building initiatives)**

A regional exercise, held in January 2018 in Mombasa, Kenya, to develop an outlook of critical habitats and Marine Protected Areas in the Western Indian Ocean set off the process that will help establish a baseline for achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and targets 14.2 and 14.5 in the region.

Sustainable Development Goal 14 targets in the region, with a specific focus on the northern Mozambique channel area that is shared by five countries.