

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

Executive Summary

This note summarizes recent work under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) relevant to ocean affairs and the law of the sea that have taken place between September 2020 and June 2021. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea is invited to post the full text of this contribution on its website.

The CBD Secretariat coordinates the globa

INTRODUCTION

1. This note consists of brief descriptions of the work carried out under the CBD in the following areas related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea: (i) ecologically or biologically significant marine areas; (ii) compilation of relevant experiences in various issues related to marine and coastal biodiversity; (iii) addressing threats to marine and coastal biodiversity; (iv) facilitating the identification and reporting of other effective area-based conservation measures in the marine fishery sector; (v) supporting the development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; (vi) capacity building and partnership activities through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative; (viii) participating in or co-organizing various online global events; and (ix) providing scientific and technical input to relevant international processes.

OF THE PROCESS, BUILDING OF CAPACITY AND COMMUNICATION OF ITS OUTPUTS

(paragraphs 267 and 271 of resolution 75/239)

Regional workshops to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs)

2. The Secretariat coordinates the global process to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs). Since 2011, the Secretariat has coordinated a series of regional workshops to facilitate the description of EBSAs, 321 of which have thus far been considered by COP, included in the CBD EBSA repository and transmitted to the UN General Assembly and relevant international processes. The outputs of the regional EBSA workshops, as considered by COP, are available online at the EBSA website (<http://www.cbd.int/ebsa>). During the reporting period, the Secretariat has conducted the following activities in connection with this role.

Modalities for modifying the descriptions of EBSAs and describing new EBSAs

3. At its fourteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD considered modalities for modifying the description of EBSAs, for describing new areas, and for strengthening the scientific credibility

scientific information on EBSAs stemming from regional EBSA workshops more accessible to non-specialists. All six booklets are available at: <https://www.cbd.int/marine>.

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6. On the occasion of the 10-year anniversary of the EBSA process, with the support of the Japan Biodiversity Fund, the Secretariat, together with the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, produced a publication entitled *Special Places in the Ocean: A Decade of Identifying Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas*

(<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/9d7c/5fd3/7acd6d05cf22d677226ea808/sbstta-24-inf-02-en.pdf>, which took place online (informally) in February and formally, in its first session, in May and June 2021.

Implementation of the Voluntary Specific Workplan on Biodiversity in Cold-water Areas within the Jurisdictional Scope of the Convention¹

(paragraphs 262, 263, 264 of resolution 75/239)

10. On the basis of input received from Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations in response from notification [2018-080](#), dated 27 September 2018, the Secretariat prepared the *Synthesis of Submissions on Experiences for the Implementation of the Voluntary Specific Workplan on Biodiversity in Cold-water Areas within the Jurisdictional Scope of the Convention*. This document was provided as information for the SBSTTA at its twenty-fourth meeting (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/de15/bf26/9dc5233c4b5c9de468c2337a/sbstta-24-inf-03-en.pdf>), which took place online (informally) in February and formally, in its first session, in May and June 2021.

Implementation of the Voluntary Practical Guidance on Preventing and Mitigating the Impacts of Marine Debris on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats.

(paragraphs 35, 224, 289, *inter alia*, of resolution 75/239)

11. On the basis of input received from Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations in response to notification [2018-080](#), dated 27 September 2018,

peer-review process generated significant interest, and some 40 sets of comments were received. Given the technical nature of many of the comments, the Secretariat engaged an expert to revise the document. Once finalized, it will be published in the CBD Technical Series (<https://www.cbd.int/ts>), with a view to informing Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations in their efforts to address the impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats.

Addressing impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity

14. The Secretariat has also been active in synthesizing knowledge and experiences relevant to addressing and mitigating the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity. This work is addressed in paragraph 11, above.

FACILITATING THE IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING OF OTHER-EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES IN THE MARINE FISHERY SECTOR

(paragraphs 257, 265 and 266 of resolution 75/239)

15. In COP decision 14/8, the Conference of the Parties adopted the definition of “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECMs) and welcomed scientific and technical advice on other effective area-based conservation measures, as contained in annex III to the decision, to be applied in a flexible way and on a case-by-case basis. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties invited IUCN, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and other expert bodies to continue to assist Parties to identify other OECMs and to apply the scientific and technical advice.

16. Pursuant to this request, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Fisheries Expert Group of the Commission on Ecosystem Management of IUCN, and the European Bureau for Conservation and Development, in collaboration with the Secretariat, organized an expert meeting on OECMs in the marine capture fishery sector (Rome, 7-10 May 2019). The report of this meeting was issued as an information document for the twenty-fourth meeting of SBSTTA (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/81e7/867d/30ed1258e8837c34bb184124/sbstta-24-inf-10-en.pdf>), which took place online (informally) in February and formally, in its first session, in May and June 2021.

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

17. In response to recommendation 23/1 of the 23rd meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technological and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), and for the information of participants in the twenty-fourth meeting of SBSTTA, the Secretariat produced an information document entitled Available

FIFTH EDITION OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK (GBO-5) AND GBO-5 OCEAN HIGHLIGHTS

19. The fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-5) was launched during a special virtual session in preparation for SBSTTA-24 and SBI-3 on 15 September 2020. The flagship publication of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), GBO is a periodic report that summarizes the latest data on the status and trends of biodiversity and draws conclusions relevant to the further implementation of the Convention. GBO-5 provides a final assessment of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as lessons for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and transitions needed to realize the vision agreed by the world's governments for 2050 of 'Living in Harmony with Nature'.

20. The CBD Secretariat highlighted the main findings of GBO-5 with respect to marine and coastal biodiversity and made them available in a short document called *GBO-5 Ocean Highlights: Final Assessment of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in Marine and Coastal Areas and Transitions Needed for*

While nearly all of the Aichi Targets are relevant in some way to marine and coastal biodiversity, this document focuses on Targets 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 15, those that are especially relevant to achieving a healthy, productive and sustainable ocean, and is available here: <https://www.cbd.int/marine/gbo5/>.

CAPACITY-BUILDING AND PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE

(section II of resolution 75/239, including paragraph 24)

SOI Impact Study

21. The CBD Secretariat, along with the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, is conducting a study that takes stock of the many achievements of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) during its first decade: *Building capacity to support progress towards the Aichi*

SOI Post-2020 Action Plan

23. The CBD Secretariat is coordinating the development of “Post-2020 Action Plan” for SOI to support the achievement of the Post-2020 Framework in marine and coastal areas. With the forthcoming adoption of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework expected at CBD COP 15, SOI must reflect the priorities and challenges of the Post-2020 Framework. As part of the development of this plan, the Secretariat conducted a survey of selected participants in SOI activities, including collaborators, trainers, and donors, to provide substantive background on the global landscape of capacity-building needs and opportunities.

24. Other capacity-building initiatives are underway, including the production of EBSA training modules (see above, under EBSAs), and a plan in its early stages of development together with UN DESA and the Government of France, to support implementation of the Post-2020 global biodiversity framework in small island developing States (SIDs).

STRENGTHENING MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS (NBSAPs)

25. Together with the Government of Germany and the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-

above) and highlighting the major opportunity provided by the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to achieve a healthy ocean into the future (<https://sdgs.un.org/fr/node/24649>).

1 October: co-organized, with United Nations Environment Programme and the European Commission, a webinar briefing on the Regional Seas Programmes and the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (see above).

22 October: Participated in the Eighth Special Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (<https://www.unep.org/events/conference/eighth-special-session-african-ministerial-conference-environment>)

19 November: Participated in World Island Network webinar, organized by Small Islands Organisation (SMILO) and the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) (<http://www.smilo-program.org/en/events/past->