

The three technical reports from the first cycle were very useful. We expect to have similar reports (or small brochures) from WOA II, with 10-15 pages containing key summaries for the public and policy makers. (*Republic of Korea*)

Though the WOA is not policy descriptive, if it contains region scientific issues identified in WOA II, it may contribute to making policy improvement in the 3rd cycle of the Regular Process. (*Republic of Korea*)

We observe that the regional workshops based on their outcomes; and the participation in the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event have been successful in raising awareness regarding the Regular Process, and bringing several stakeholders affecting and affected by the marine environment to a common platform. In addition, the capacity-building inventory is useful initiative, and is created in a user-

draft and integrate all the comments. Thus, it is suggested to extend the time of review by Member States, so as to ensure its effectiveness. (*China*)

It is required to consider including the Section name in the draft table of contents because important keywords (e.g., marine plastics) appear more than (*Japan*)

Regarding the question about the dedicated webpages for the process of review, we find them practically useful with necessary information. (*Japan*)

A

WOA-II. However, we believe that there would have been strong benefits of review by these organisations. This is important both from a fact-checking point of view, to ensure robustness of the information, appropriate referencing, but also in terms of providing comments and inputs on the conclusions and recommendations developed by the Group of Experts that are relevant to the mandates of these organisations. We strongly feel that in the future this step should be integrated as a systematic part of the process. (*IOC*)

The UNFCCC secretariat commends the two-stage review process as it was methodical and comprehensive, and extends its cooperation if it is invited to conduct any review and submit comments, especially with subject-matter expertise on climate change and the environment, should intergovernmental organisations be invited to participate. (*UNFCCC*)

The webpages are accessible, and materials posted have been easy to locate, making them essential for the efficient functioning of the activities within the Regular Process. (*UNFCCC*)

The UNFCCC secretariat is in agreement with the frequency and length of the meetings conducted. However, in light of travel restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is foreseeable that if these meetings are to be conducted using electronic means of communication in the third cycle, the length and duration of the meetings may have to be altered, condensed or spread over more days. (*UNFCCC*)

The review process could be improved. (*UNCTAD*)

The current review process appears to be complex and opaque and should be reviewed. It would be preferable for relevant UN system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes, to have an opportunity to provide substantive inputs and/or review the drafts at an early stage. At present IGOs have not been asked to review either the first or the second draft of WOA II building on relevant substantive areas of expertise and work. This is not conducive to creating synergy of effort. In addition the opportunity for additional quality control by drawing on substantive areas of interested IGOs has been missed. (*UNCTAD*)

6. Regarding the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole and its Bureau:

The Working Group should discuss how well the second cycle actually achieved the goal of evaluating trends and identifying gaps, including for example whether the approach to data management and analysis was sufficiently consistent and systematic between chapters and Assessments. The

usable for comparative purposes, is worth attention. (*New Zealand*)

New Zealand continues to attach importance to the Regular Process (and the World Ocean Assessment) as a global mechanism to review the environmental, economic and social aspects of the oceans. However as other synthesis reports dealing with ocean issues emerge, for example IPBES and IPCC products, New Zealand also considers that the Working Group should carefully examine

context of growing demands on government and expert science resources to contribute to more and more synthesis reports. (*New Zealand*)

The Working Group should have a discussion about how the World Ocean Assessment has contributed to the strengthening of the regular scientific assessment of the state of the marine environment and, importantly, its role in enhancing the scientific basis for policymaking (e.g. how has the assessment influenced policymaking?). (*New Zealand*)

Holding the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole twice a year needs to be considered. The first should be held in the first half of the year for the preparation of world ocean assessment and for the improvement of awareness. This meeting should be participated by key experts involved in the drafting process. The second meeting should be held just before the General Assembly (GA) for decision making and preparation of the report to GA. (*Republic of Korea*)

The poor coordination between the Group of Experts (GoE) and the Bureau in the first cycle did not substantially improve in the second cycle. The GoE insistence on closing the nomination process for members of the Pool of Experts remains a mystery and yielded unnecessary disharmony. Communications between the GoE and Bureau could have been substantially improved. For example, the GoE transmittal of information to the Bureau on reorganization of WOA-II Chapters, which had been approved by the AHWG, was too late for the Bureau to recommend actionable solutions, although the Bureau had informed the GoE on several occasions of concerns on specific chapters. This example was representative -absence of knowledge of the workings of the GoE and indicated missed opportunities for improved communications from the GoE. The GoE did not provide progress reports to the Bureau, although a Summary of Discussions of each meeting of the Bureau was made available to the GoE. (*United States of America*)

Coordination between the Secretariat and Bureau was vastly improved in the second cycle compared to the first cycle. My personal thanks are extended to the Secretariat. Four examples are:

(1) A draft list of WOA

In order to ensure more adequate expertise and geographical distribution in the Group of Experts: Raise awareness in each country of the relevance of participating in the Group of Experts. (*Portugal*)

The fields in the existing database are enough and the database is searchable. Maybe one condition to be accepted in the Group of Experts would be to regularly update the information on the database and a red mark would appear in case the expert did not updated the information on an yearly basis. (*Portugal*)

The experts in the Group of Experts are nominated by the Governments. All Governments should provide the technical capacity for the expert work. (*Portugal*)

In the RP, the group of experts (GoE) plays a very important role. The GoE is to be composed of a maximum of 25 experts according to paragraph 287 of resolution 70/235. We hope the 25 seats will be filled with a balanced distribution of the professional fields for the next cycle. (*Republic of Korea*)

The reliance on a small number of Lead GoE Members for a large number of chapters was considered

-II. At the beginning of the WOA-II process the concept of single point of failure was theoretical but at the end of the process the single point of failure was observed. This Lesson Learned occurred in the first cycle and was repeated in the second cycle. (*United States of America*)

The Group of Experts was constituted and composed through a process ensuring regional decision-making through the election process, and in accordance with the regional groups within the United Nations. There is merit in exploring through sustained outreach and multilateral discussions with electing groups promoting gender balance in the nomination process, prominently showcasing historic statistics on gender representation on the webpage of the Regular Process, to further engagement on this issue in third cycle. (*UNFCCC*)

The database on the expertise of members is helpful to contextualise or orient oneself with the respective expertise of members of the Group of Experts. In order to ensure adequate information on all members, meetings of the Group, could include an additional item on the agenda regarding their respective background and information, and this information gleaned by the rapporteur could contribute towards enhancing the database. (*UNFCCC*)

Based on the experience of the UNFCCC secretariat, conducting one-one support sessions with individual members regarding the use of the relevant ICT applications and methods in advance of meetings, and conducting

The two phased sequenced appointment process for the Pool of Experts and the National Focal Points for the Regular Process have to a large extent worked well and should be fully exploited by completely implementing the terms of reference. (*UNEP*)

While States are to nominate and interorganisational organisations recommend experts to the Pool of Experts, a method of further outreach for consideration, could be the inclusion of a step wherein international organisations reach out to academic and research-based institutes registered as observers within their respective processes for communicating information regarding experts with expertise in those areas identified in the document on gaps in expertise. These may be provided to States for their consideration during the nomination process. (*UNFCCC*)

In order to increase awareness regarding the Regular Process and encourage more participation from regions with lower proportional representation in the Pool of Experts, partnership with regional media and outreach organisations can be explored. Similarly, through sustained outreach and multilateral discussions with electing groups promoting gender balance in the Pool of Experts by, prominently showcasing historic statistics on gender representation may be a step towards achieving gender balance within the Pool of Experts. (*UNFCCC*)

We believe that this appointment process to the Pool of Experts

model for the construction of the writing teams which also includes early-career academicians and experts to provide crucial capacity-building for the next generation of experts capable of supporting the Regular process. *(UNFCCC)*

As identified above, allocated budgetary resources to a secure and common document-sharing platform is indeed an effective method for working collaboratively. However, the purchase of licenses for using collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams and Slack may enable coordination relating to the writing process. *(UNFCCC)*

In the interests of maintaining high quality standards, Intergovernmental Organizations should be invited to identify or submit data, information as well as substantive analytical reports and other research outputs for consideration, so that appropriate material can be integrated by the writing team. IGOs should also be invited to review and/or provide some comments regarding the drafts prepared by the writing teams. *(UNCTAD)*

11. Regarding capacity-building:

Capacity-building of WOA not only provides technology output and capacity training to developing countries, but also further strengthens the assessment capacity of the project itself, to solve the lack of information and data which are needed for the assessment. Currently, regional workshops held during the first and the second cycles of WOA have analyzed the capacity-building needs of different regions, but substantial capacity-building programmes have not been carried out. The lack of information, data and methods faced by WOA has not been effectively resolved, either. It is suggested to strengthen capacity-building through technical training and the transfer of technology in a targeted way, and to help regions to improve the capacity of monitoring, analysis and assessment, which will solve the lack of information and data in the long run and lay the foundation for the future work of WOA. *(China)*

Korea will continue to support the activities related to Capacity Building. *(Republic of Korea)*

The capacity-building inventory

overcome challenges relating to travel restrictions or availability of funds. *(UNFCCC)*

This should be broadened to include capacity building material, tools and guidance by relevant IGOs. *(UNCTAD)*

12. Regarding regional workshops:

The time of expert contributors who participate on a voluntary basis should be used efficiently. In that respect consideration could be given to changing the timing of the regional workshops, which play an important role in bringing stakeholders together, to enable writing teams to meet and coordinate amongst themselves early in the drafting process. *(New Zealand)*

The guidelines and draft agenda for regional workshops were crucial to have effective workshops. *(Portugal)*

The regional workshop was very useful in sharing the outputs of the previous report, refining the outline of the report, and communicating with the writing team and regional experts. Consideration for the extended duration and frequency of regional workshops is recommended. *(Republic of Korea)*

The time interval to prepare Workshops was too short, which reduced potential effectiveness of Workshops. *(United States of America)*

The Regional Workshops continue to create awareness on the Regular Process, during the second cycle member states have provided more support in the hosting of the workshops, an indication that the Regular Process is getting more buy in from the countries. The Regional Seas Platform continues to be a strong support for capacity building, and marine and coastal environmental assessments are typically one of the principal activities of the Regional Action Plans. *(UNEP)*

The secretariat expresses its thanks for the detailed yet concise outcomes from the workshops that were published on the webpage. *(UNFCCC)*

The UNFCCC secretariat commends the transparent selection process for the selection of participants in the regional workshops. A suggestion would be to partner with academic institutions, especially with those who have framework Memoranda of Understanding with international organisations part of the Regular Process for increased engagement. The lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic are particularly geared towards more hybrid or virtual delivery of capacity-building and cooperation events, therefore preparation for and adoption of best practices in virtual capacity-building workshops would be beneficial to sustain the momentum of the Regular Process in its third cycle. *(UNFCCC)*

15. Regarding communication:

At present, face-to-face meetings and emails are the two major means of communication for the WOA working mechanism. In addition, the Group of Experts also holds online conferences, and employs Share Point Online to store, modify and share manuscripts of each chapter as well as other documents. The advantages of telecommuting have been highlighted after the outbreak of COVID-19. Thus, it is suggested to establish a WOA online working platform, which can be exclusively used by the Bureau, the Secretariat, the Group of Experts, the Pool of Experts and writing teams of each chapter. Through this platform, the Group of Experts and writing teams can store, share and modify relevant documents and communicate with each other regularly; members of the Pool of Experts can learn the progress of the project and needs in a timely manner, and better participate in the project. *(China)*

In order to further expand the influence of WOA, it is suggested to increase the publicity input and broaden the publicity channel, such as online promotion, international conferences, regional training programmes and domestic publicity by Member States. This will attract more experts to participate in the work of WOA, and make the assessment results play a better role. *(China)*

We found outreaches and awareness-raising activities useful and relevant. To provide any suggestions with a view to further improving these outreach and awareness-raising activities, we recommend strengthen outreach activities at well-known international meetings and events dealing with the ocean. *(Japan)*

New Zealand welcomes ongoing improvements to communication and coordination between Regular Process stakeholders. *(New Zealand)*

Communication on the relevance of the assessment is key and the third cycle would need to invest in communication (to everyone involved) in a simple and understandable language (the process is quite complex). *(Portugal)*

The outreach and awareness-raising activities have been useful and relevant but with a short impact on stakeholders except those already involved on the process. There should be a well-defined communication strategy able to reach in an effective way several target audiences, being society and policy makers the more relevant ones at this special times that we live now. A solid communication strategy should be implemented and shared from the early beginning with the NFPs. *(Portugal)*

The website could use simpler language and an easy way to explain this relevant but complex process. *(Portugal)*

The outreach activities such as regional workshops, briefings or side events on the on the Regular Process for States and other stakeholders in the margins of intergovernmental meetings, and the production of brochures on the Regular Process were highly effective initiatives towards creating greater awareness and inviting participation by all stakeholders. Towards enhancing the scope of this outreach, the activities could involve methods creating a direct conduit for the views of civil society and members of the public to share knowledge, views and experiences that contribute towards the writing process. There could be greater sharing of information to relevant UN-Oceans focal points and other relevant focal point to enable wider sharing of information across UN. (*UNFCCC*)

The website is accessible, and materials posted have been easy to locate, making them essential for the efficient functioning of the activities within the Regular Process. (*UNFCCC*)

Relevant UN system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes need to be more involved. (*UNCTAD*)

16. Regarding resources and funding:

New Zealand would welcome an update from the Secretariat and the Group of Experts on the suitability and adequacy of the budget at the next Working Group meeting. Some expert contributors from New Zealand consider that that additional resources are needed to improve aspects of the process, including for example related to communication and peer review. (*New Zealand*) ~~peer review.~~ (

greater visibility of the beneficiaries and outcomes of the fund, may positively affect the fu *(UNFCCC)*

Towards encouraging greater contributions to the scholarship fund, greater targeted outreach, and conducting a mapping exercise of potential donors based on express commitments to supporting capacity-building actions, including in other avenues may potentially yield results. Additionally, it is suggested that with the requisite approvals in place, there might be a case for creating a strong brand identity for the fund and project, including nomenclature based on inputs from inputs of key stakeholder including potential donors. *(UNFCCC)*

17. Regarding multilingualism:

The integration of multilingualism in the activities of the second cycle was an excellent initiative, especially if we also aim to involve civil society in the understanding of the needs of such exercises. *(Portugal)*

The integration of multilingualism in the activities of the second cycle was satisfactory. However, as we move forward with the activities of the Regular Process, there is a possibility of directing resources towards an approved and permanent live translation software plugin in the process of conducting electronic meetings, to enable greater participation in all six official languages of the UN. *(UNFCCC)*

18. Regarding lessons learned process:

The COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted the ability of some Member States and stakeholders to input into aspects of the World Ocean Assessment, including potentially the Member State peer review and this lessons learned exercise. The next Working Group meeting may wish to consider including, on its agenda, a discussion on lessons learned, to provide another opportunity for Member States to contribute to this exercise. The Working Group may also wish to exchange views on the nature and extent of impacts of the pandemic on the Assessment to ascertain whether these have been material. *(New Zealand)*

Comments made through this questionnaire may be very useful. We hope that the aggregated views of experts will be taken into account in the next cycle. *(Republic of*

questions to distinguish between Member states and other participants including intergovernmental organisations. The lessons learned exercise could be structured so as to provide distinct focus on procedural issues, substantive issues, and other issues. (*UNFCCC*)

19. Regarding the third cycle of the Regular Process:

While the scope of the first cycle is to establish a baseline concerning the state of the marine environment, the scope of the following cycles is extended to evaluating the trends of marine environment and identifying gaps. In order to organize the future work better, it is suggested to fix the outline to some extent and update it as appropriate on the basis of state-of-the-art knowledge of marine environment. Based on a relative fixed outline, it is suggested to provide the requirements for the professional background of writing teams for each chapter. This will be helpful for the establishment of writing teams and will ensure the smooth running of the subsequent writing work. (*China*)

Sustainable and ecosystem

resolutions and emerging pressures on the marine and coastal environment
(*European Union*)

The third

