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16<sup>th</sup> Global Meeting of the Regional Seas  
Conventions and Action Plans  
Athens, Greece 29<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014

***Meeting Report***

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# RSCAP Bulletin

A Summary Report of the Sixteenth Global Meeting of the UNEP Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans  
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## SUMMARY OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> GLOBAL MEETING OF THE REGIONAL SEAS CONVENTIONS AND ACTION PLANS: 29 SEPTEMBER-1 OCTOBER 2014

The 16<sup>th</sup> Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) took place in Athens, Greece, from 29 September to 1 October 2014.

The objectives of the meeting were to: discuss the role of the RSCAPs in the process of developing a sustainable development goals (SDG) on oceans within the post-2015 development agenda; present progress in the implementation of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2013-2016; discuss the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) and regional actions on marine litter; and discuss the development of a roadmap for implementing the visioning priorities for the next 10 years.

Around 50 participants attended the meeting. Participants were representatives of 16 regional seas conventions and action plans, of UN organizations and intergovernmental organizations, and the media.

During the three days of the meeting, the representatives of the RSCAPs interacted intensively through presentations, open discussions and brainstorming sessions on a long-term vision for the RSCAPs.

On the first day of the meeting, UNEP launched the report “The Importance of Mangroves: A Call to Action” at a press conference on the 40th Anniversary of the Regional Seas Programme.

This report summarizes the presentations and discussions during the meeting.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNEP REGIONAL SEAS PROGRAMME

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) launched its Regional Seas Programme (RSP) in 1974. The Regional Seas Programme addresses the accelerating degradation of the world’s seas and coastal areas and promotes the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environment by engaging countries to implement specific actions to protect their shared marine resources.

Following the adoption of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) in Washington, D.C., in November 1995, UNEP initiated actions to revitalize the RSP and with decision 20/19 A of 5 February 1999, the UNEP Governing Council stressed the need to strengthen the RSP as UNEP’s central mechanism for implementation of its activities relevant to chapter 17 of Agenda 21, which addresses “the protection of the oceans, all kinds of seas, including enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, and coastal areas and the protection, rational use and development of their living resources.”

With more than 140 countries participating in 13 Regional Seas Programmes and five partner programmes, the Regional Seas Programme is one of the most globally comprehensive initiatives for the protection of marine and coastal environments. The 13 regions covered are: Black Sea, Wider Caribbean, East Asian Seas, Eastern Africa, South Asian Seas, Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) Sea Area, Mediterranean, North-East Pacific, Northwest Pacific, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, South-East Pacific, Pacific, and Western Africa. The five independent partner programmes cover the Antarctic, Arctic, Baltic Sea, Caspian Sea and North-East Atlantic Regions.

The Regional Seas Programme functions on the basis of periodically revised action plans implemented, in most cases, under the framework of legally binding regional seas conventions. The Plan of Action for the Mediterranean was the first to be adopted in Barcelona, Spain in 1975 and, following the model of the Barcelona Convention, regional conventions and associated protocols addressing specific issues have been adopted for 12 of the regional programmes.

Global meetings of the Regional Seas Programme have been convened by UNEP on an almost yearly basis, since the first Interregional Seas Programme consultation in The Hague, the Netherlands, in June 1998, with the general purpose to allow Regional Seas Programme secretariats and coordinating units to present the status of the implementation of their respective action plans and conventions; to define common areas of interest for cooperation; and to discuss the future of the Regional Seas Programme.

**THE 14<sup>TH</sup> GLOBAL MEETING OF THE REGIONAL SEAS CONVENTIONS AND ACTION PLANS:** Held in Nairobi, Kenya on 1-3 October 2012, the 14<sup>th</sup> Global Meeting discussed the ecosystem approach to RSCAPs, the Establishment of an *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Strategic

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Directions 2013-2016, and the World Oceans Assessment on Reporting and Assessing the State of the Marine Environment, including socio-economic aspects.

**THE 15<sup>TH</sup> GLOBAL MEETING OF THE REGIONAL SEAS CONVENTIONS AND ACTION PLANS:** Held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, on 30 September - 1 October 2013, the 15<sup>th</sup> Global Meeting addressed partnerships between RSCAPs and UN Agencies, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and Civil Society and Regional Marine Governance.

## REPORT OF THE MEETING

### *WELCOMING REMARKS*

On 29 September, Mette L. Wilkie, Director, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), opened the meeting and expressed her appreciation of the work done across the regions in implementing the respective conventions, action plans, and protocols. She highlighted 40 years of action of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme (RSP), and stressed that the Programme, in which 145 countries are engaged in one or more of the regional seas, delivers high value results to member states. Nadia Giannakopoulou, Secretary General, Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece, emphasized how a regional approach in the Mediterranean has been successful in bringing together scientists, policy makers, and a diverse range of stakeholders. She provided examples of how the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) has built 40 years of experience in catalyzing marine protection, addressing land-based sources of pollution, and providing a platform for sustainable development and peace in the region. She noted the importance of the RSP in the post-2015 development agenda and urged participants to share new ideas for strengthening implementation, for instance on attracting additional financing.

Gaetano Leone, Coordinator, MAP, welcomed the opportunity to exchange information between the Conventions and their partners and jointly look forward to the future of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) to ensure that “the RSP is as valuable as it was 40 years ago in its inception.” He discussed the main challenges and pressures on the Mediterranean and reported on the current review of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, noting the goal of harmonizing the Strategy with the Rio+20 outcomes and the post-2015 development agenda.

Alberto Pacheco Capella, Coordinator, RSP, UNEP, presented the purpose and expected outcomes of the meeting drawing attention to: the role of the Regional Seas Conventions in the process of developing an SDG for oceans; the mid-term implementation of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2013-2016; the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPLM) and regional action plans on marine litter and the visioning roadmap for the next 10 years of the RSCAPs.

### *SESSION 1*

A keynote presentation on Regional Seas in the post-2015 agenda and Sustainable Development Goals was delivered by video by Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Special Advisor to the Executive Director on Post 2015 and SDGs, and Jackie Alder, Head, Freshwater and Marine Ecosystems Branch, UNEP. The presenters underscored the need for the SDGs to build on existing conventions and to define measurable targets. They described the role of RSCAPs in the post-2015 agenda as translating global targets into nationally appropriate actions; supporting technology transfer; leveraging international and domestic private and public financing; and contributing to monitoring, reporting and accountability.

Following the keynote presentation, session chair Gaetano Leone, Coordinator, MAP, invited interventions by the Chairs of the RSCAPs regarding their future and potential role in the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda.

Mehmet Emin Birpınar, President of the Bureau, Barcelona Convention, noted that Convention has broadened its initial focus on pollution control to include issues such as integrated coastal zone management, biodiversity conservation and climate change, and has encouraged the adoption of environmental legislation at national level. He highlighted increased coastal population as a primary cause of environmental deterioration in the Mediterranean and stressed that solutions to further tackle degradation should encompass sustainable consumption action plans, effective and participatory governance, partnerships among relevant initiatives and integration of the cultural dimension in sea-related policies.

Victor Escobar, Chairman, Convention for the Protection of the marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) Commission, reported that the contracting parties of the Convention have suggested including in the SDGs targets on the protection of ocean health and biodiversity; sustainable fisheries; small-scale fisheries and marine pollution. He noted that OSPAR could provide scientific and technical information to the SDG process and contribute to the implementation of those targets where it would bring added value, and called for inclusive, participatory and accountable RSCAPs institutions.

Leszek Dybiec, Chair, Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), discussed efforts over the last 30 years to monitor and report on marine debris, fisheries, seabird mortality, and deep-sea fisheries. Stressing that the health of the southern ocean is critical to the health of the planet, he described CCAMLR’s ecosystem monitoring work to collect data on changes in ecosystems and how these are related to harvesting activities.

Rodrigo Guzmán Barros, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile, provided an overview of current efforts the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS), in addressing: over exploitation of fisheries; illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; strengthened resilience; and restoration of damaged areas. He reported that CPPS is providing support to countries in the region to build synergies between sustainable development and marine goals and to achieve the international objectives of the Aichi Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). On implementation of the Galapagos Agreement, he stressed: strengthening CPPS through a new strategic direction that highlights the ecosystem approach, and regional coordination on targeting pollution.

Nina Lysenko, Ministry of Environment, Dominican Republic, stressed two key challenges for the Cartagena Convention: uniting and building baseline data in a region with varying capacities to collect data; and the role that these databases play in building climate change adaptation, mitigation, and policy at the regional level. She summarized a range of national activities in the Dominican Republic that have stemmed from the country’s involvement with the Cartagena Convention. She provided examples including: technical capacity development; integrating marine issues into sectoral policies and legislation as well as inter-sectoral planning; addressing the main threats to marine and coastal biodiversity; and activities that link marine and land-based issues such as improved land-use planning and ecosystem monitoring of mangroves.

Angelina Madete, Vice President’s Office, Tanzania, on behalf of the Chair of the Nairobi Convention, recalled that oceans issues have the highest political support in Africa, and questioned whether the institutional set up of the regional seas conventions, developed 40 years ago primarily to monitor

marine pollution effects, is capable of addressing current challenges and opportunities. She identified dumping of toxic waste, oil spills, IUU fishing; loss of biodiversity and climate change as main threats to Africa's oceans and envisioned the future of the RSP as supporting effective, informed governance systems and ecosystem management under UNEP intellectual leadership.

Following the intervention by the RSCAPs Chairs, several partner organizations expressed their views on possible collaboration with the RSP regarding the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. Francis Chopin, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) said that FAO, as the technical specialized agency of the UN with competency in fisheries and aquaculture, has many areas of collaboration with UNEP and highlighted a new collaborative initiative with UNEP and IMO to quantify, prevent and reduce the amount of plastics accumulating in the aquatic environment and their impacts on fisheries and biodiversity.

Julian Barbieri, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), drew attention to the results of the GEF funded Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme, which produces indicators and baselines that may be relevant to environmental assessment and planning for the regional seas. He also highlighted a new GEF project on strengthening governance for large marine ecosystems (LME) as an opportunity for collaboration with the RSP.

Michael Shewchuk, UN Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Seas (UNDOALOS), suggested strengthening cooperation with the RSP in the exchange of information and inputs into the reports of the UN Secretary-General, assistance on ocean affairs and law of the sea, contribution to the World Ocean Assessment, and increased cooperation in capacity building.

David Osborn, International Atomic Energy Agency, identified monitoring of pollution, data management, quality assurance and capacity building as areas for strengthened collaboration with the RSP.

Marceil Yeater, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), noted many similarities between the RSP and CITES in terms of member states' participation and international partners (FAO, UNEP, UNDOALOS, UNESCO and regional fisheries management organizations), and suggested closer collaboration on the SDGs and biodiversity.

Yannick Beaudoin, UNEP's Global Resource Information Database (UNEP GRID-Arendal), provided an overview of partnerships with a number of the RSPs, including: development of technology infrastructure in data poor areas in Western Africa; building capacity in marine spatial planning in the Pacific; ecosystem services valuation in collaboration with the Abidjan Convention; and support to UNEP's Blue Carbon Initiative. He noted UNEP GRID-Arendal's interest in collaborating with the RSCAPs to add value to these regional processes.

Damon Stanwell-Smith, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), discussed three areas of interest for collaboration with the RSP: data, assessments, and indicators; facilitating partnerships; and capacity support. He stressed the importance of robust data as essential for underpinning the work of the RSCAPs and noted WCMC's efforts to locate and bring together marine, coastal, and biodiversity data at both global and sub-global scales.

Jackie Alder, UNEP, noted core themes that emerged from the discussion during the session: that regional seas have a mandate and role to play in identifying targets and indicators within the post-2015 development agenda process; that RSCAPs' coordination role should be capitalized upon

in post-2015 development agenda; and that RSCAPs play an important role in regional ocean governance. She highlighted the significant experience RSCAPs have in ecosystem management, marine spatial planning, and associated tools and how they can help apply these tools to the science-policy interface. Alder concluded that RSCAPs are at the forefront of the sustainable development agenda and this message must be communicated to negotiators at the UN in New York.

## SESSION 2

On 29 September, in a session chaired by Nelson Andrade Colmenares, Coordinator, Cartagena Convention, 15 RSCAPs presented mid-term reports on the implementation of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2013-2016 highlighting challenges and opportunities under each of the six strategic areas: application of the ecosystem approach in the management of the marine ecosystems; implementation of the Manila Declaration of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) especially in the areas of wastewater management, nutrients and marine litter; strengthening regional and national capacities on marine and coastal governance; provision of tools to decouple economic growth from environmental pressures in the marine and coastal environment by promoting resource efficiency and productivity, including assessing the ecosystem services values; improving global knowledge and trends on the status of the marine environment, contributing to the World Oceans Assessment; and strengthening collaboration mechanisms with relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), UN agencies and international financial institutions. Reports were presented by:

- the Barcelona Convention
- the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)
- the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
- the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS)
- the Tehran Convention
- the Abidjan Convention
- the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)
- Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME)
- the Cartagena Convention
- the Black Sea Convention
- the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea & Gulf of Aden (PERSGA)
- the Convention of the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention)
- the OSPAR Convention
- the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
- the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP)

The RSCAPs reported on numerous initiatives and projects in support of: the application of ecosystem management; integrated coastal zone management (ICZM); the publication of technical guidelines and studies in support of awareness raising and capacity building in the field of wastewater management; ecosystem valuation; and the organization of workshops to contribute to the Global Ocean Assessment. Some regions, such as ROPME and Black Sea, also reported on reflecting the six Strategic Directions in their programmes.

All interventions stressed the importance of synergies and partnerships in achieving implementation and presented experiences of collaboration with, among others, the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area; the General Fishery Commission of Mediterranean; the North East

Atlantic Fisheries Commission; the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center; UNIDO; UNEP GRID-Arendal; CBD; FAO; IMO; and the World Bank.

Specific examples of activities and results included, *inter alia*: support to and establishment of marine protected areas in the Mediterranean and development of protected area management plans in the Caribbean; regional partnerships such as the MedPartnership and the Caribbean Challenge Initiative; Northwest Pacific regional node on marine litter; Marine Spatial Planning projects at regional and national scale in the Pacific; the regional solid waste management initiative 2011-2015 and a cost benefit analysis of waste disposal options in the Pacific; work on deep seas minerals in the Pacific; raising awareness of fishing communities in the South Pacific on marine litter including disposal; GEF projects such as the Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States and the Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater economic valuation pilot projects; collaboration with UNIDO on reduction of unintentional emissions of persistent organic pollutants and on ship recycling, and regional task force on nutrient and litter in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region; the drafting of a Marine Litter Action Plan for HELCOM; assessment of sharks in the Western Indian Ocean; the International Coral Reef Initiative in East Asia; development of national action plans adopted by each member and efforts to ratify a land-based pollution protocol in the Caspian Sea region; development of an ICZM protocol for the Abidjan Convention, collaboration with African River Basins, and development of a Blue Print on Ocean Governance for Africa; the development of a second Holistic Assessment for the Baltic Sea that will be indicator-based; and a scoping study on pollutants in the South Asian seas, and integrating marine information into the South Asia Biodiversity Clearinghouse Mechanism.

### SESSION 3

On 30 September, Vincent Sweeney, Coordinator, GPA, provided an overview of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML), a new multi-stakeholder global partnership with the objective of protecting human health and the environment through the reduction and management of land-based and sea-based marine litter. He noted UNEP's convening power to bring together stakeholders and coordinate with relevant initiatives. Sweeney also focused on actions, including: supporting Regional Seas programmes as well as national and municipal authorities in preparing and updating regional action plans; supporting media training; establishing a marine litter observation system and an online marine litter network to improve access and sharing of information; establishing regional nodes; and conducting a core study on microplastics requested by the UN Environment Assembly in June 2014.

Michael Shewchuk, UNDOALOS, discussed marine debris under the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, recalling the obligations of parties to take measures to reduce and control marine pollution from any source. He noted that several other conventions and agreements include provisions on marine debris, such as through the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention) and protocols, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the CBD, the UN Fish Stock Agreement, the Convention on Migratory Species and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. He highlighted better understanding of the source of marine debris, enforcement, cross-sectoral coordination, public awareness and financial support as current challenges.

In the ensuing discussion, participants noted the need for coordination among the many international instruments on marine debris and the challenge for international instruments to regulate national sources of pollution.

Francis Chopin, FAO, discussed abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear, stressing that the marking of fishing gear, management of fish aggregation devices and adoption of best practices to reduce the risk of ghost fishing can contribute towards reducing loss and waste of commercial food fish and loss of biodiversity. He reiterated the importance of inter-agency collaboration on mitigating the impacts of marine pollution, including from plastics on the aquatic environment and especially, on fisheries and aquaculture. He underscored the need for raising awareness on the impacts of abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear among policy makers and fishing communities.

During an open discussion, chaired by Alexander Tkalin, coordinator, NOWPAP, participants discussed a range of issues including: marine debris of natural origin; lost fishing gear; and getting fish aggregation devices back on the global agenda. Participants shared examples of legal responses to marine litter in Japan and Republic of Korea where specific legislation has been introduced in conjunction with national policies, sub-policies, and guidelines. Participants also debated the issue of governance, with some noting the need for a common framework to facilitate a streamlined and coordinated approach across the many organizations working on marine litter, and what roles UNEP could play in this effort.

Gaetano Leone, MAP, presented the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, which entered into force in July 2014. He described the Regional Plan's approach, including extended producer responsibilities, sustainable procurement policies, use of economic incentives and other innovative mechanisms. Leone noted that although the adoption of the Plan is an achievement, important challenges remain for its implementation, including large financial requirements and investments by contracting parties.

In response to questions from participants, the Convention representatives clarified that the implementation of the Plan draws on both national and international funds, and that the 18 month process prior to adoption, involved one consultancy and one expert meeting in addition to Secretariat staff time. Participants also discussed the need for prioritization of actions under the Plan and the need for a consistent use of the terms "litter" or "debris".

Abou Bamba, Coordinator, Abidjan Convention, stressed that growing urban populations along the West African coast generate considerable solid waste, impacting all marine sectors, livelihoods, and the health of communities. For example, he noted that Lagos has a population of between 9.5 and 12 million and generates 10,000 tons of waste daily. He explained that lack of waste facilities, public awareness, financial resources, data to quantify the magnitude of waste, and inadequate legal and enforcement systems contributed to the problem. To address these challenges, he highlighted the need for: collaboration with the GPA; implementation of the Protocol concerning the Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBSA) adopted in 2012; the development of a Marine Litter Regional Plan; partnerships with civil society organizations in public awareness campaigns; and going "to the source" by engaging municipal authorities.

Warren Lee Long, SPREP, stressed that an integrated regional approach is critical for research, monitoring, and finding solutions, and that partnerships are essential to enhancing capacity in the region. He discussed how the

organization supports Pacific small islands development states in waste management and pollution control, including through: preparing marine pollution prevention legislation; improving integrated solid waste management; climate-proofing waste management systems as a climate change adaptation strategy; conducting oil and e-waste cost analyses; standardizing waste audit methodologies; and deployment of marine litter booms in streams and around urban areas. He emphasized the role of outreach campaigns utilizing strong emotive messaging and fostering a sense of ownership to be most effective. Lee Long concluded that among the long-term regional priorities were: microplastics; transport of invasive species through marine litter; finding imaginative ways of engaging the public; and greater collaboration with industry to minimize litter, find new uses for litter, and develop ways to commercialize waste treatment.

During an open discussion, participants identified the importance of establishing standardized ways to monitor community-level action and engagement on marine litter. Participants also deliberated the definitions of marine litter versus marine debris, with some noting that clear terminology would help clarify parameters for monitoring programmes. They also discussed microplastics, stressing that it was important to pinpoint the sources, whether from microbeads, larger plastics, or micro-particles from fabric sources. Returning to the Abidjan Convention, participants noted that evaluating marine litter from a health perspective (sources of heavy metals, carcinogens, and a breeding ground for malaria) might help leverage additional resources to combat the problem.

Mahir Aliyev, Coordinator, Tehran Convention, discussed the challenges in addressing marine litter in the Caspian Sea, only recently emerging as an important concern but still not a priority for the Convention's contracting parties. He reported that the regional assessment has identified urban soil waste, coastal development, river runoffs, and oil and gas exploration as among the main sources of marine litter, but that more detailed information on magnitudes, hotspots, and an action plan are not available. He noted that national legal frameworks specifically addressing marine litter are lacking and that the Convention's Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land based Sources and Activities includes provisions for addressing marine litter.

Ziad Abu Ghararah, Secretary-General, PERSGA, outlined the process for the development of a regional action plan on marine litter for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. He noted that scarce information on the importance and impacts of marine litter, weak enforcement of control measures and inadequate management of solid waste in coastal areas are current challenges, and emphasized the development of a monitoring protocol for the assessment of marine litter and clean-up campaigns as two tools for action at the regional level.

In the ensuing discussions, participants expressed differing views on whether a sole focus on monitoring of marine litter to collect more and better data would slow the implementation of actions based on currently available partial information, with some arguing that what really counts is data that supports cost effective interventions.

Nelson Andrade Colmenares, Coordinator, Cartagena Convention, presented challenges and lessons learned in tackling marine litter in the Wider Caribbean Region, highlighting coastal cleanup day initiatives with the Ocean Conservancy in several countries, environmental education through schools and communities in Barbados, collaboration with the Guyana solid waste management authority, and economic valuation of solid waste in Saint Lucia. He summarized lessons learned as, *inter alia*: public support is critical for long term success, private sector is readier

than governments to invest in waste reduction, and legal frameworks and incentive/disincentive systems are required for waste prevention and management.

During the final part of the day, session chair Dixon Waruinge, Head, Nairobi Convention, asked participants to identify priorities to address in the short-term. The Helsinki Commission noted development of an Action Plan containing a target indicator on marine litter. CPPS focused on awareness-raising, and presented experience in engaging youth on finding innovative ways to reutilize litter. The Cartagena Convention stressed allocation of resources over a sustained long-term period. OSPAR noted that solid waste policies often focus on the terrestrial side, and it was important to identify and communicate where the marine perspective fits when searching for cross-sectoral and political support. In the same vein, participants underscored that litter is an issue largely managed at the municipal scale, and it was important for the RSCAPs to engage with mayors and port authorities in finding solutions. SPREP identified the development of national action plans on LBSA, noting the mutually supportive relationship between the national and regional levels in mobilizing coordinated responses. SPREP also reiterated the issue of behavioral change, noting that many action plans sit on shelves unimplemented and that RSCAPs must look to the household level to help address the issue through "culturally appropriate national campaigns that reach every person in the country". Participants returned to the issue of behavioral change, both on national shores and on the high seas, throughout the discussion. Participants also noted that a useful approach to capturing the attention of policy-makers was to articulate the costs of inaction. Finally, UNEP encouraged the RSCAPs to work bilaterally with the GPA, with its mandate to support the GPML, to identify priority actions that could be supported by available resources and that also could feed into recommendations in the upcoming study on microplastics.

#### SESSION 4

On 1 October, Darius Campbell, Executive Secretary, OSPAR Commission, chaired the session on the development of a roadmap for implementing the visioning priorities for the Regional Seas. Yannick Beaudoin, UNEP GRID-Arendal, presented the outcomes of the visioning workshop held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 3-4 July 2014, as the starting point for the day's discussion, noting that the workshop identified four thematic areas (extraction, pollution, governance, and impacts of climate change and ocean acidification), one long term (10 years or more) impact for each thematic area, and mid-term (five to 10 years) outcomes for each impact. He gave an overview of the impacts and outcomes, with the impacts being that: within RSCAP areas of responsibility ecosystem services are maintained and/or restored and pollution inputs to the marine environment are reduced to levels that do not negatively impact healthy ecosystem functions; RSCAPs are more effective at taking and enforce decisions that maintain or improve the quality of the marine and coastal environment; and the RSCAPs have helped maintain ecosystem health, human well-being and overall resilience in the face of climate change impacts and ocean acidification.

In a plenary open discussion, participants discussed resource mobilization and governance. Some argued that these are cross-cutting issues underpinning outcomes and impacts in all thematic areas. Others noted that finance should not be a blocking element, as consideration of other aspects, such as governance, could also help unlock financing. Interventions also stressed that an increased visibility of the RSP within UNEP and with other stakeholders could play a role in leveraging financing. Participants also debated how peer reviewed science is used in negotiated processes and

decision making both at global and national levels. During the remainder of the morning, four breakout groups focused on untapped opportunities and challenges that could affect the implementation of the vision in their respective regions.

When reporting back in plenary, participants highlighted, on pollution, opportunities in: developing and implementing policy and legal frameworks such as LBS protocols and marine litter frameworks; protocols that combine biodiversity and pollution; sustainable consumption and production; and long-term data monitoring programmes. They noted challenges with data availability and access; fundraising and financial resources, especially for costly wastewater treatment; employing geoinformatics in uniform reporting; microplastics; addressing consumption and corporate influence on consumption and production; technological support to reduce pollution loads and target sources of transboundary pollution; development of environmental and monitoring standards to be applied across countries; and addressing capacity challenges in small countries.

On climate change, participants stressed that the global interest in the issue should be seen as an opportunity. They highlighted opportunities for mainstreaming climate change into the ecosystem approach and integrated coastal zone management. On challenges they noted a mismatch between the adaptation process at the global and the regional level and flagged a question: how do the Regional Seas best define their mandate within the larger climate change agenda and forward cooperation? Regional Seas have a mandate in the climate change agenda and see opportunities to: develop regional strategies on adaptation measures and strengthen the ecosystem based management (EBM) adaptation as opposed to the current engineering focused adaptation solutions; mainstream climate change into ecosystem approach work; and facilitate capacity development on how to prepare vulnerability studies.

On governance, participants stressed: implementation of all protocols under the Conventions; strengthened collaboration with neighboring Regional Seas; increasing focus on the science policy interface; and the fact that many Regional Seas benefit from strong regional bodies in their areas. They underscored challenges with inter-ministerial coordination; implementation of protocols at national levels; the need to find the correct balance between an often diverse range of countries within each Regional Sea; identifying policy gaps; integrating the post-2015 development agenda into policy formation across sectors; and harmonizing national policies to include green growth and blue economy.

Participants pointed out that regions had diverse governance systems and government types, and negotiating this diversity when implementing RSCAPs often presented challenges. They also noted that in several conventions, the science policy



Participants break into groups to brainstorm visioning roadmap for RSCAPs and identify untapped opportunities

interface does not effectively exist and there is a need to ensure country ownership of project scientific outcomes. Participants discussed: the need to support more interregional cooperation; more collaboration with marine protected areas as they often share similar legislative constraints; strengthening synergies across MEAs; helping small countries tackle reporting and other requirements for MEAs; clarification of what “governance” covers; and influencing political thoughts and stakeholders. They noted addressing internal governance within UNEP and other UN agencies would help with the effective and durable delivery of policies to the regions and countries.

Finally, on extraction participants noted opportunities for further cooperation with regional fish bodies, with global biodiversity MEAs and with the retailer/consumer sector, and opportunities to help industries reduce illegal activities. They noted that challenges included: oil exploration and sand mining and in some countries deep water minerals extraction; engaging fisheries ministries; integrated ecosystem management across sectors and in marine protected areas; incorporating ecosystem valuation into management regimes; ecosystem restoration; strategic environmental assessment; developing thresholds for sustainable use; and mapping.

In the afternoon, participants brainstormed in groups on how to best engage with contracting parties to affect change over the next 10 – 15 years. Guiding questions for the brainstorm session were: what value can the Regional Seas process add that is different from what is provided by the global or national processes on their own? How do you propose joining forces with the contracting parties to deliver on a Regional Seas vision? How can contracting parties, with support from secretariats, tackle the challenges that have been identified during the morning session?

When reporting to the plenary, several interventions were made including on the uniqueness of the RSCAPs that provide a platform to bridge the global agenda with concrete actions at national and local levels, feeding information generated into global processes. Participants noted that RSCAPs offer contracting parties: trusted support, ability to act, coordination and resource mobilization; a platform to define regional seas issues with the acceptance of concerned countries; the scale which is needed for the EBM approach; and opportunities for North-South cooperation between scientific institutions.

Participants agreed on the value of informing contracting parties about the visioning priorities but that this process should not lead to a formal endorsement or resolution from them. Participants also expressed the view that the vision could provide coherence and serve as a vehicle for creating a common, unified message for all regional seas in order to help overcome the fragmentation of objectives and priorities across the regions.

One intervention suggested that ways to overcome some barriers could include: mobilizing civil society and public opinion; using RSCAPs comparative advantage to improve cross agency work at national and regional scale; and initiating changes in UNEP to fully integrate the RSP in the programme of work and budget. Another participant suggested upgrading the mandate of the conventions secretariats to play a coordinating, clearing-house role for activities in the regions.

**Venue and timing for 17<sup>th</sup> Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans:** Alberto Pacheco Capella announced that the 17<sup>th</sup> Global Meeting of the RSCAPs will take place in Istanbul, Turkey, tentatively in October 2015.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CLOSING REMARKS**

Alberto Pacheco Capella, UNEP, underscored the value of coherence and consistency for the RSCAPs to have a global impact. He thanked all participants for their engagement



RSCAPs Representatives (photo courtesy of UNEP)

and participation in the meeting and for the inputs to the discussions on the SDGs as well as the Strategic Directions and the visioning exercise.

Gaetano Leone, Coordinator, MAP, expressed his appreciation for the sharing and learning from experience during the three days of the meeting.

Jackie Alder, UNEP, emphasized that a goal of the meeting was to facilitate the creation of synergies and exchanges between the Regional Seas, and she thanked the coordinators, Chairs of the Bureaus, and partners for sharing their perspectives. In closing, she noted the depth of substance shared during the last three days and highlighted the high political engagement in the RSP.

Leone closed the meeting at 4:25 PM.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Partnership

**Meeting:** The Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) is a global partnership that aims to build partnerships and enhance capacity to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets on marine and coastal biodiversity. Among its objectives, the SOI works to develop partnerships among different stakeholders and sectors at global, regional and local scales. Its Global Partnership Meeting will take place from 3-4 October 2014. **dates:** 3-4 October 2014 **location:** Seoul, Seoul-T'Ukpyolsi, Republic of Korea **contact:** Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity **phone:** +1 514 288 2220 **fax:** +1 514 288 6588 **e-mail:** [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int) **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=SOIOM-2014-01> and <http://www.cbd.int/marine/doc/soi-brochure-2012-en.pdf>

**CBD COP 12:** The twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will engage in a mid-term review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Aichi targets. The theme of the meeting will be 'Biodiversity for Sustainable Development.' The Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP MOP 7) will take place immediately before COP 12. **dates:** 6-17 October 2014 **location:** Pyeongchang, Gangwon (Kangwon-do), Republic of Korea **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1 514 288 2220 **fax:** +1 514 288 6588 **e-mail:** [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int) **www:** <http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/e-doc/?notification=2036>

### 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the IMO's Marine Environment

**Protection Committee:** The Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organization

(IMO) will meet for its 67<sup>th</sup> session in London, UK, from 13-17 October 2014. **dates:** 13-17 October 2014 **venue:** IMO Headquarters, 4 Albert Embankment **location:** London, England, UK **contact:** IMO Secretariat **phone:** +44 (0)20 7735 7611 **fax:** +44 (0)20 7587 3210 **e-mail:** [info@imo.org](mailto:info@imo.org) **www:** <http://www.imo.org/> and <http://www.imo.org/MediaCentre/MeetingSummaries/Pages/Default.aspx>

**Ninth International Conference on Waste Management and Technology (ICWMT 9):** This meeting is organized by the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific, the Society of Solid Waste of Chinese Society for Environmental Sciences and the Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences, Research Institute of Solid Waste Management. The meeting will convene under the theme, 'Towards Closed Loop of Waste Management,' with financial support from the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). **dates:** 29-31 October 2014 **location:** Beijing, China **contact:** Chen Yuan **phone:** +86-10-62794351 **fax:** +86-10-62772048 **e-mail:** [icwmt@tsinghua.edu.cn](mailto:icwmt@tsinghua.edu.cn) **www:** <http://2014.icwmt.org/ICWMT2014/indexen.asp>

**CMS COP 11:** Ecuador will host the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in November 2014, marking the first time that a CMS COP is held in Latin America. The decision was taken during the 41<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee, on 28 November 2013, in Bonn, Germany. The COP will be preceded by a High Level Ministerial meeting on 3 November. Another Standing Committee meeting will be held 9 November upon closure of the COP. **dates:** 3-9 November 2014 **location:** Quito, Pichincha, Ecuador **contact:** Veronika Lenarz **e-mail:** [vlenarz@cms.int](mailto:vlenarz@cms.int) **www:** <http://www.cms.int/en/cop11>

**IUCN World Parks Congress 2014:** The sixth International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Parks Congress will serve as a vital link to achieving IUCN's overall vision of a "just world that values and conserves nature" and deliver the IUCN Programme 2013-2106. **dates:** 12-19 November 2014 **location:** Sydney, New South Wales, Australia **contact:** Trevor Sandwith **e-mail:** [trevor.sandwith@iucn.org](mailto:trevor.sandwith@iucn.org) **www:** [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap\\_home/?11730/I...](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap_home/?11730/I...)

**Second International Ocean Research Conference (IORC):** The Second International Ocean Research Conference (IORC) will bring together the global scientific



community to plan for the coming decade of international collaboration in marine science and technology. IORC will also focus on improving ocean governance. The event includes 16 thematic sessions that will focus on: building scientific knowledge; applying knowledge for societal benefit: achieving ecosystem management and sustainability; and improving governance and building capacity. The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) (UNESCO-IOC) and The Oceanographic Society are organizing the conference. **dates:** 17-21 November 2014 **venue:** Barcelona International Conference Center (CCIB), Plaça de Willy Brandt, 11-14 08019 **location:** Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain **contact:** Technical Secretariat **phone:** +34 932374988 **e-mail:** secretariatiorcbcn@fnob.org **www:** <http://www.fnob.org/en/international-ocean-research-conference> and <http://www.calameo.com/read/000476034ce51383bbf7c>

**Arctic Biodiversity Congress:** Organized by the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group, this event will promote the conservation and sustainable use of Arctic biodiversity through dialogue among scientists, policy-makers, government officials, industry, civil society and indigenous peoples. It is closely linked to the findings and recommendations of the first Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA) released in May 2013. **dates:** 2-4 December 2014 **location:** Trondheim, Sor-Trondelag, Norway **contact:** Congress Secretariat **e-mail:** [caff@caff.is](mailto:caff@caff.is) **www:** <http://www.arcticbiodiversity.is/index.php/congress>

**CBD Expert Workshop to Prepare Practical Guidance on Preventing and Mitigating the Significant Adverse Impacts of Marine Debris on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats:** This workshop is being organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with the support from the European Commission. It will bring together nominated experts to discuss the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats. **dates:** 2-4 December 2014 **location:** Baltimore, MD, US **contact:** CBD Secretariat **e-mail:** [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int) **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2014/ntf-2014-059-marine-en.pdf>

**Ninth Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to Study Issues Relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine BBNJ:** This meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (BBNJ) is the third of three meetings (April 2014, June 2014 and January 2015) that the UN General Assembly (UNGA) requested be convened. The meetings aim to make recommendations to the UNGA on the scope, parameters and feasibility of an international instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). These three meetings are expected to result in a summary of discussions that will be submitted to the President of the UNGA, and are anticipated to contribute to a decision to be taken at the 69th Session of the UNGA on the development of a new international instrument under UNCLOS. **dates:** 20-23 January 2015 **venue:** UN Headquarters **location:** New York City, US **contact:** Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs **e-mail:** [doalos@un.org](mailto:doalos@un.org) **www:** <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/biodiversityworkinggroup.htm>

**Third Session of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Plenary:** The third session of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) plenary will review progress made on the adopted IPBES work programme for 2014-2018, including the related budget and institutional arrangements for its implementation. In addition, the third session of the IPBES

plenary will select the members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) based on the nominations received from governments. The event will be preceded by consultations and a stakeholder day on 10-11 January. **dates:** 12-17 January 2015 **location:** Bonn, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany **contact:** IPBES Secretariat **e-mail:** [secretariat@ipbes.net](mailto:secretariat@ipbes.net) **www:** <http://www.ipbes.net/news/564-invitation-to-ipbes-third-plenary-12-17-january-2015-bonn-germany.html>

## GLOSSARY

CCAMLR	Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COBSEA	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia
CPPS	Permanent Commission for the South Pacific
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPA	Global Plan of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities
GPML	Global Partnership on Marine Litter
GRID	Global Resource Information Database
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission
ICZM	integrated coastal zone management
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IUU	illegal, unreported, and unregulated
LBSA	land-based sources and activities
LME	large marine ecosystem
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MEAs	multilateral environmental agreements
NOWPAP	Northwest Pacific Action Plan
OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
PERSGA	Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea & Gulf of Aden
ROPME	Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment
RSCAPs	Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans
RSP	UNEP Regional Seas Programme
SACEP	South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDOALOS	UN Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Seas
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization