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**United Nations  
Environment Programme**

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**The 19<sup>th</sup> Global Meeting of the Regional Seas  
Conventions and Action Plans  
Cape Town, South Africa  
29 November 2017**

## **Report of the meeting**

**Meeting Report of the 19<sup>th</sup> Global Meeting of the Regional Seas  
Conventions and Action Plans**

Regional Seas annual meeting minutes

List of participants

Attached document

Ocean Resolution from UN Environment Assembly 2

1.0 Lisa Svensson (Chair) opened the meeting and introduced new staff members. Hellen Ojiambo is unfortunately leaving the co-ordination unit to join the GPA team.

1.1 Participants were asked for feedback from the collaboration meeting, '*Building International Partnership to Enhance Science-Based Ecosystem Approaches in Support of Regional Ocean Governance*' (<http://marine.iwlearn.net/capetown2017>), held during the previous two days at which all present attended (except Abou Bamba, Abidjan Convention, due to illness).

1.2 The majority of the attendees felt the partnership meeting was interesting and useful. It was noted that it is good to have a concrete platform to share ideas and knowledge as well as get practical examples of best practices. Also noted was the benefit of having multiple UN agencies, The Global Environment Fund (GEF), The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC), present at the meeting.

Further comments from the floor suggested that;

The collaboration meeting represented a continuation of work from last year in Korea, Seoul. Since then, new partnerships have formed in the Black Sea region for example including improved relations with the Barcelona Convention and FAO.

The Cartagena Convention suggested that MOUs and joint projects reaching across the Atlantic may be useful for the future.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP), said that additional to fisheries bodies, other sectors also see benefits through the blue economy, so we need to prepare for engagement with other industry sectors.

Gaetano Leone reported that the Mediterranean has strong relations with fisheries, so no one size fits all in terms of the governance model.

The Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), reported that there were few existing governance mechanisms in south east Asia.

Lisa concluded that UN agency collaboration was crucial in the years ahead to strengthen the regional seas as a platform for engagement.

1.3 At the final panel session of the collaboration meeting (28 November) a summary of the Co-ordinators views was delivered by Lisa.

### **Feedback from the collaboration meeting; 5 initial reflections**

1 -Regional Seas Programs (RSP) and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) provide a good framework for collaboration and action

The first step of successful partnership between RSP and RFMO could be a formal agreement which allows the parties to frame the mutual expectations and priorities

2 -The Large Marine Ecosystem projects (LMEs) are instrumental in scaling up implementation and supporting the mandates of Regional Bodies

- 3 - a) Science-Policy interactions can benefit from semi-formal processes and structures.
- b) Resources are crucial
- c) Regional approaches are needed as one size doesn't fit all
- d) Start small to build trust between parties
- e) Proceed in a voluntary basis.
- f) The involvement of local NGOs and civil society is crucial for local Community engagement

4 -Science is a decision making tool but the question was raised– how do we include socio-economic science, we should not be limited to oceanographic science.

5 -It is important to link with regional political blocks (European Union, The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) etc. for political will and buy in. While closer RSP and RFO collaboration and LME projects, strengthen integrated and ecosystem based approaches, the political blocks are levers for broader societal and economic change.

The Caribbean is heading in the right direction with their interim coordination mechanism which includes fisheries, non-governmental organizations, LMEs, diplomatic and economic unions.

Good collaboration was also reported in the Asia Pacific region between LMEs and Regional Seas.

The Global Partnership on Nutrient Management under the GPA was mentioned as an example of good collaboration between the FAO and UN Environment on GEF LME projects.

#### **Points to consider for the future**

1. Target joint actions, especially with fisheries bodies, on issues of mutual interest, MPAs, protected species, water quality
2. Link into the CBD's Sustainable Oceans Initiative process in April 2018 and the proposed Project Strengthening Regional Ocean Governance on the High Seas, (PROG) meeting in Germany 2019.
3. Engage civil society in regional proposals.
4. There is a need for the Regional Seas; Regional Fisheries bodies and LMEs to share experiences as regularly as is practically possible by holding consultative meetings as regularly as possible - every two years.
5. Let's consider changing the format of the annual Global Regional Seas
6. To remain practical and action oriented, we should encourage regional meetings between RS, RFMOs and LME projects. FAO and UN Environment can catalyze some of the regional meetings and include Member States, for further development of cooperation and partnership (region by region Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin- North America)
7. Follow up: next meeting, we should be reporting on this regional approach pilot as we move towards a more widely recognized mechanism.

8. Support the uptake of the LME science and EBM into policy organs at the regional and national level. This could be done by supporting science to policy platforms in different regions by using the relevant mandated organization at the regional level.

Also noted: the Barcelona and Cartagena Conventions are starting to discuss closer cooperation, both in terms of sharing but also resource mobilization as both look across the Atlantic.

#### Caribbean

- Closer cooperation is needed with the Gulf of Mexico LME because within Cartagena Convention area, we have 3 LMEs and not just 2.
- Follow up: already have meetings set up with the US and Mexico and the LME project unit.

2.0 Participants then discussed engagement with UN Environment HQ.

Send out information to co-ordinators.(UN Ocean resolution from UN Environment Assembly 2).

2.1 Monthly meetings were agreed upon with one or two issues presented from each Co-ordinator that should be followed up. Everyone agreed to call in. The co-ordination unit should send invitations early and the agenda.

The last Wednesday of the month was decided upon. The co-ordination unit will find a suitable time for all.

One function of the meeting might be to inform Co-ordinators about our strategic position and what is happening on a global level in each region and how regions can benefit from global initiatives. News from donors would also be useful. Most thought it a good idea to focus on specific themes e.g. reefs, for each meeting.

3.0 David Lymer from SIDA reported on their priorities and strategy development within their organisation. David said that they want to be sure that there is co-ordination between agencies and the collaboration meeting confirms that the process has started. They also support civil society and have several bilateral arrangements with various NGOs. Sida are keen to advance regional activities.

4.0 Lisa Svensson then described the unfolding oceans agenda. Peter Thompson had been nominated the UN's special envoy, creating space for SDG 14. The Principality of Monaco, Sweden and Norway are supporting him and his team. An action document from NY, had been produced which identified Ocean Action hubs, their launch on marine pollution was on 28 November 2017. UN Environment has been nominated to lead on coral reefs. The Ocean Conservancy will lead on pollution, TNC will lead on ecosystems. IOC to lead on Ocean Science and produce a draft ladder response to the Decade of Ocean Science.

5.0 Habib el Habr, Co-ordinator of the GPA, described the GPA review which covers the period since the Manilla declaration 6 years ago. One key question for the review is where should global programme go? The review gives UN Environment a mandate for next 5 -6 years. The IGR (Intergovernmental review) will take place in 2018. The Regional Seas are the implementing arms, through the LBS (land based sources) protocols.

5.1 There were three resolutions at UNEA including one on marine litter championed by Norway, including micro plastics and the development of a new architecture on marine litter-control mechanisms etc.

6.0 Lisa highlighted upcoming meetings in 2018- Our Oceans conference in Bali in October 2018. There will be a conference in Nairobi in 2018 on the Blue economy. The meeting is international but the focus will be on Africa. This will be led by the Government of Kenya.

It was suggested that the Regional Seas want to amplify their voice in the Oceans agenda and lead on some aspects. UN Environment is keen to work in partnership with key actors. Here Regional Seas could play a crucial role for their regions.

7.0 The representative from Croatia then outlined proposals to hold the next RS Coordinators meeting in Split. They already have a meeting planned on 25 September 2018 to discuss their ICZM protocol. There will be a focus meeting on IZCM and MSP which is open to donors and civil society. Their room will hold 30 plus break out areas. Lisa gratefully acknowledged the offer but thought that we may need space for 100 to add in external people. The representative agreed to look into it and let us know.

8.0 Joana Akrofi, UN Environment, then gave a presentation on the second cycle of the Regular Process.

8.1 The process represents the science policy interface and is accountable to UNGA. It is a global mechanism for reporting on science and socio economic parameters. First cycle 2002-2005.

8.2 Member States are to designate focal points from their country. For the second cycle, RS co-ordinators need to send CVs of their experts to Joana Akrofi.

There were five workshops this year (2017), 1 in Auckland attended by Warren Long, Lisbon, Brazil-Patrick Debels represented Cartagena Convention, Bangkok-Lev Nerin (NOWPAP) inputted to this. Next is December 14-15 2017 on Zanzibar, Tanzania for the Western Indian Ocean.

8.3 Gaetano Leone reported that the QSR (quality status report) will be delivered to the COP in Tirana in a few weeks. He asked what is link of the QSR to the Regular Process. Joana Akrofi said that they will feed into the Regular Process. Joana will collate all the QSR reports and input them on behalf of UN Environment

Regional Workshops also flag up local work. In 2019 they will produce the status of the environment report. Joana Akrofi is the focal point for the World Ocean Assessment (WOA).

8.4 Participants asked if the WOA is part of the Oceans process? UN Environment are competent experts to support the process. The Group of Experts recognise the RS. Joana commented that non state actors can host workshops.

8.5 There was a proposal from Fiona put on the table from last years meeting in Korea, to help RS with reporting.

8.6 Indicators can be used to input into process along with SDG reporting. Combine the two?

8.7 Participants asked how to bring reports from Secretariats into the process? How to influence the process?

HD was asked to prepare a strategy on RS reporting. Resources for reporting are limited.

SPREP reported that we can use the UN Regular Process for updating the World Oceans Assessment to bring experts together. This would create stronger buy-in by stakeholders in the subsequent steps/phases of ocean management.

9.0 In closing the meeting, HD thanked the participants for their inputs over the last few days and looked forward to further collaborations.

Meeting closed at 1.30pm.

**List of Participants**  
**Regional Seas annual meeting**  
**November 29<sup>th</sup>, Cape Town, South Africa**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Abou Bamba	Abidjan Convention
Dixon Waruinge	Nairobi Convention
Habib El-Habr	Global Programme of Action (GPA)
Helen Davies	Regional Seas Coordination Unit
Lisa Svensson	Regional Seas Coordination Unit
Joana Akrofi	Science Division
David Lymer	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
Faustina Mukanzi	Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Branch
Gaetano Leone	Barcelona Convention
Hellen Ojiambo	Regional Seas Coordination Unit
Iryna Makarenko	Bucharest Convention
Lorenzo Galbiati	Barcelona Convention
Lorna Iniss	Cartagena Convention
Sivaji Patra	South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP)
Jerker Tamelander	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
Warren Lee Long	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
Katrin Eitrem Holmgren	Regional Seas Coordination Unit
Julian Reyna	Comision Permanente del Pacifico Sur (CPPS)
Bashar el Bataineh	The Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA)
Zeljka Skaricic	Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP-RAC)