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Eighth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical
Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol
Concerning Specially Protected Areas and
Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region

Panama City, Panama, 5 - 7 December 2018

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING

For reasons of economy and the environment, Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies of the Working and Information documents to the Meeting, and not to request additional copies.

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING

Having convened the Eighth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) in the Wider Caribbean Region;

The Meeting recommends,

RECOMMENDATION I

Having reviewed the “Status of Activities of the SPA Subprogramme for 2017-2018 (including status of STAC7 Recommendations and COP9 Decisions)” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.3) and commending the work undertaken by the Secretariat and the SPA-RAC;

Having reviewed the “Report of the SPA Regional Activity Centre (SPA-RAC) in Guadeloupe: RAC Operations and Budget for the period 2017-2018” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.4) and **gratefully acknowledging** the generous contribution of the Government of France;

Taking note and welcoming the “Update on the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM) and its major activities” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.5);

Recognizing the work and accomplishments of the CaMPAM network for over 20 years;

Having reviewed the Report on the “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean through Ecosystem-based management” Regional Workshop (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.6 and UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG 38/INF.8 Rev.1), **taking note** of the outcomes of the Special Session on the Project “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean through Ecosystem-based management” convened on 5 December 2018, Panama, and **gratefully acknowledging** the generous support of the Government of Italy towards commitments of Member States in their implementation of SDG 14 through ecosystem-based and holistic Marine Protected Area management;

Having reviewed the “Draft Workplan and Budget of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Subprogramme for the 2019-2020 Biennium” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/5) and noting its linkages and contributions to the SDGs, the SAMOA Pathway and Aichi Targets;

Acknowledging the comprehensive Workplan presented for the biennium 2019-2020 and the limited budget available thus far; **and**

Further recognizing that such a broad-scope work programme, demands the setting of priorities and increased capacities of the Secretariat and the SPA-RAC;

Recommends that:

1. Governments of the region join the SPA Protocol as Contracting Parties and **further recommends** that the Secretariat continue efforts to secure ratification with Governments which have initiated actions to join or are in the process of joining the Protocol.
2. The COP10 provides further guidance to the Secretariat regarding the priority actions for the SPA work programme, as well as assistance for securing increased resources both for activities and Programme management by the Secretariat.
3. The Workplan and Budget be presented to COP10 for approval.
4. The Secretariat and Parties emphasize within the proposed Workplan:
 - (i) the need to secure financial support to the continuation of activities under the CaMPAM network and forum, particularly focusing on the role of MPAs as a vehicle for the application of EBM, DSS and MSP, especially in light of the Project “Effective MPA Development and Implementation for Achievement of SDG 14.5” to be implemented in the Caribbean with the support of the UN Environment (Ecosystem Division).

- (ii) the further development of the on-going cooperation between CEP and the OSPAR Commission under the Voluntary Commitment focusing on MPA enhancement of management capacities.
- (iii) the development of a second phase of the project “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean through Ecosystem-based management” project.
- (iv) the networking of Marine Mammal Protected Areas in line with the MMAP through the implementation of the CARI’MAM Project.
- (v) the opportunities presented through the implementation of the CARIB-Coast Project in support of the conservation and management of mangroves and coral reefs to address coastal resilience.

RECOMMENDATION II

Having reviewed the “Proposals for Protected Areas to be listed under the SPAW Protocol” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/4);

Taking note of the renewed commitment for the development of the cooperation programme for protected areas listed under the Protocol as per Article 7 (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.36/INF.9); **and**

Recognizing the contribution from the SPAW-RAC and the experts participating in the Ad hoc working group;

Taking note of the review by the Protected Areas Working Group and the report under the coordination of SPAW-RAC;

Recommends that:

1. The SPAW-RAC continues to maintain, improve and update the dedicated database to house the national reports on the protected areas listed as well as those recommended by STAC to be listed including the web-based tool for Parties to prepare and submit the protected areas reports on-line.
2. The COP10 approves the following Protected Areas proposed by the Government of France the National Natural Reserve of Kaw-Roura and the National Natural Reserve of Amana in French Guiana; and the Mount Scenery National Park of Saba Island by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
3. Parties which have not done so consider submitting protected areas to be listed under the Protocol in the upcoming biennium for future listing.
4. The Secretariat through SPAW-RAC with the participation of the Governments of Colombia, France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United States of America, develops Terms of Reference for the Ad hoc Protected Areas Working Group for consideration by the COP10 taking into account the suggestions made during the meeting.
5. In keeping with Article 19 and para. 25 of the approved Guidelines and Criteria for listing protected areas, the Secretariat sends a reporting format on the status of the listed sites to Contracting Parties.

RECOMMENDATION III

Having reviewed the “Report of the Working Group on the Evaluation of Species for listing under the Annexes to the SPAW Protocol”, (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/3); and the proposals for listing and supporting documents on status of species of sharks and rays (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.7);

Recognizing the contribution from the SPAW-RAC and the experts participating in the Ad hoc working group;

Recommends that:

1. The following proposed species be added to the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol:

Annex II

Pristis pristis, Largetooth sawfish

Annex III

Carcharhinus falciformis, Silky shark

2. The SPAW RAC identify all species listed as entire groups under the Protocol and includes the species individually in the list, such as the species included under the group of corals and marine mammals.
3. The Secretariat through SPAW-RAC with the participation of the Governments of Colombia, France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United States of America, develops Terms of Reference for the Ad hoc Species Working Group for consideration by the COP10 taking into account the suggestions made during the meeting:
 - Addressing as priority the following species: the parrotfish and other herbivores associated with coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangroves with due consideration to socio-cultural-economic dimensions; the whale shark *Rhincodon typus*; the manta ray *Manta birostris*, as well as other species proposed by Contracting Parties. In this context, enhanced collaboration for regional management strategies should also be considered for listed species under the Annexes of the Protocol.
4. Parties are invited to identify and propose new species for listing to be assessed by the Working Group and for consideration by STAC9.

RECOMMENDATION IV

Welcoming and noting the United States Exemptions Report (2017) (contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40 /INF.9);

Welcoming and noting the intervention by the Government of Curacao updating the STAC about the status of their exemption report submitted at STAC7 as a response to decision 7 (iii) of COP9;

Taking note of recent reports on the taking of hundreds of marine mammals per year and reports of harvesting of sea turtles still being allowed by some Contracting Parties in direct infraction to the Protocol;

Recommends that:

1. The Secretariat, through SPAW-RAC, develop TORs for the Ad Hoc Working Group on exemptions for consideration by COP10 taking into accounts the suggestions made during the meeting.
2. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Exemptions review the United States Exemptions Report (2017) and report on their findings, as well as the Curacao Exemptions Report (2016) and any additional information that may be provided by the Government of Curacao since the submission of the original exemption report (as reported to STAC7) and report to the STAC9 for assessment.
3. The COP10 of the SPAW Protocol call on Contracting Parties to comply with the provisions of the Protocol and in the event that taking of any species listed under Annex II of the Protocol occurs that an exemption report be submitted to the STAC in order to demonstrate the pertinence of such take.

RECOMMENDATION V

Taking note of the Report of the Secretariat “Sargassum White Paper - Sargassum outbreak in the Caribbean: Challenges, opportunities and regional situation” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG 40/INF.8) as well as the existence of an on-line platform for discussion on Sargassum coordinated by the SPAW-RAC;

Welcoming the proposal by the Government of France to establish an Ad Hoc Working Group on Sargassum under the Coordination of the SPAW-RAC;

Recommends that:

1. An Ad Hoc Working Group on Sargassum be established, including Belize, Colombia, Curacao, the Dominican Republic, France and Grenada, with consideration of its composition regarding (among others), number of members from each Contracting Party, limited to two members per Party: to be nominated by each national Focal Point, as well as a number of seats to be allocated for representation by civil society organizations and independent experts.
2. The Working Group develop clear objectives and responsibilities for its work.
3. Establish coordination and collaboration with relevant regional and global initiatives in order to promote maximum impact of synergies and solutions to the Sargassum outbreaks.

RECOMMENDATION VI

Welcoming the convening of the Special Session on the Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network - CARIBWen (6 December 2018, Panama City, Panama) organized by the UNODC and CEP with the support of the Animal Welfare Institute;

Recommends that:

The Secretariat continue its collaboration with UNODC and interested partners to further develop and strengthen operational, prosecutorial and judicial capacities in the fight against wildlife crime in the Caribbean.

RECOMMENDATION VII

Taking note and welcoming the Regional Workshop on the Development of the Report of the: “State of the marine ecosystem and shared marine living resources” and Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the valuation, Protection and /or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the CLME+ convened jointly by the Secretariat and the CLME+ Project (GEF UNDP Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+) (3 - 4 December 2018, Panama City, Panama);

Acknowledging the need to enhance coordination among regional and subregional organisations with a mandate for management of the marine environment and living marine resources;

Recommends that:

1. The Secretariat continues progress towards completing the draft State of Habitat and Regional Strategy and Action Plan under the CLME+ for consideration at COP10 and further relevant action, taking into account the comments and inputs received by Parties and partners during the deliberations at the above Regional Workshop and other consultations as appropriate.
2. The Secretariat continue to contribute to the process supported by the CLME+ Project to identify a Permanent Policy Coordination Mechanism (PPCM) and a Sustainable Financing Plan (SFP) for consolidation of an integrated ocean governance framework in the WCR; including placing the topic on the agenda of COP10 in 2019.

RECOMMENDATION VIII

Taking note and welcoming the Ocean Foundation's international ocean acidification initiative to address ocean acidification as a regional topic of common concern to be acknowledged by the SPAW Protocol;

Recommends that:

1. The Secretariat partner with the Ocean Foundation to implement ocean acidification monitoring and mitigation projects in key marine ecosystems in SPAW member countries, and to seek joint collaboration for proposals to expand funding opportunities.