

Multi-stakeholder Dialogue / Capacity-building Partnership **Event**

24 – 25 January 2019

Concept note

A two-day Capacity-Building Event (“the Event”), will be held from 24 to 25 January 2019 in New York. The Event aims to increase awareness of the importance of the Regular Process and more generally the science-policy interface at all levels. It also seeks to highlight the importance of capacity-building in support of the Regular Process, including regarding the preparation of integrated assessments which are important to inform decision-making by policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders. It will allow for in-depth multi-stakeholder dialogues on current opportunities, gaps and needs in capacity, and will seek to foster cooperation and coordination amongst stakeholders to address these. Over two days the event will:

- Provide information on the science-policy interface from both the scientific and policy perspective;
- Synthesize the gaps and needs related to the conduct of integrated assessments for enhanced participation in and use of the outputs of the Regular Process;
- Increase awareness of assessments undertaken at various scales, the modalities which support these assessments (such as data acquisition, collection, collation and analysis) as well as the utilization of their results;
- Provide relevant lessons learned from best practices through the presentation of case studies from all levels;
- Serve as a forum for the presentation of information on relevant capacity-building initiatives, and identify needs and gaps, as well as shared priorities for capacity-building initiatives.

Provide opportunity for the identification of synergies and opportunities for cooperation and coordination with respect to capacity-building initiatives.

The Event will be open to representatives of States, relevant United Nations system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes, relevant intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders e.g., industry and civil society representatives.

Introduction

Capacity-building is one of the core objectives of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (the Regular Process). The Regular Process was established by the General Assembly following the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa (General Assembly resolution 57/141). It is recognized as the global mechanism for reviewing the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects, on a continual and systematic basis. It provides regular assessments at the global and supra-regional levels and an integrated view of environmental, economic and social aspects. Such assessments are intended to support informed decision-making and thus contribute to managing human activities that affect the oceans and seas in a sustainable manner, in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other applicable international instruments and initiatives.

In accordance with the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process, a two-day Capacity-Building Event (“the Event”), will be held from 24 to 25 January 2019 in New York, in order to provide an opportunity to build awareness and collaboration with respect to capacity-building in support of the Regular Process, including with respect to building capacity to participate in, and make use of, assessments.

The Event will allow for an in-depth multi-stakeholder dialogue on the human, institutional and systemic gaps and needs in capacity, particularly with regard to the preparation of integrated assessments. Integrated assessments are important to inform decision-making by policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders. The Event will therefore also allow for discussions on how to use such assessments for decision-making (strengthening of the science-policy interface). Given that the Event aims to foster cooperation and coordination amongst stakeholders, presentations of case studies of best practices. will be presented, in that regard, by various stakeholders and participants will have the opportunity to exchange views on, among other things, lessons learned, as well as opportunities for targeted capacity-building.

Rationale

The ocean constitutes about 70 per cent of the Earth's surface and contains 97 per cent of the Earth's water. The ocean generates most of the oxygen we breathe, absorbs a large share of carbon dioxide emissions, provides food and nutrients, regulates climate, and is important economically for countries that rely on tourism, fishing and other marine resources for income, and serves as the backbone of international trade. We are thus, dependent on it for our livelihoods, and indeed, for life itself. There are considerable challenges we face in maintaining the benefits that the ocean provides. It is not an infinite resource for development and needs to be used and managed in a way that does not diminish, but rather enhances its utility to humankind. In order for us to do this, we need a better understanding of the state of the ocean so that we can effectively plan how we use and manage its resources. This is key to sustainable development, including the effective implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and other instruments as well as for the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Now, more than ever, the gap between science and policymaking needs to be bridged.

In order for us to gain the necessary understanding of the ocean and how to benefit from it sustainably, we need to assess in an integrated manner certain aspects of the marine environment and the impacts of various activities and pressures upon it, including from a socioeconomic perspective. The Regular Process is recognized as the global mechanism for reviewing the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects, on a continual and systematic basis. It provides regular assessments at the global and supra-regional levels and an integrated view of environmental, economic and social aspects. Such assessments are intended to support informed decision-making and thus contribute to managing human activities that affect the oceans and seas in a sustainable manner, in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS and other applicable international instruments and initiatives.

It is recognized that national, subregional and regional level assessments are the building blocks for a global assessment. This raises the question of capacity since the ability to conduct integrated assessments is not uniform at the national, subregional and regional levels. Capacity-building and technology transfer are

essential for the preparation of integrated assessments and for the ability to translate the science from the assessments into policy in a way that positively contributes to sustainable development.

In 2009, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process (Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole) made recommendations to the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly on a course of action for the Regular Process, including on the possible framework for the Regular Process as well as recommendations on capacity-building and technology transfer.¹ These recommendations were subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly through its resolution 64/71. Within these recommendations, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole proposed that the Regular Process “would promote, facilitate and ensure capacity-building and transfer of technology, including marine technology, in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other applicable international instruments and initiatives, for developing and other States, taking into account the criteria and guidelines on the transfer of marine technology of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission”. Furthermore, it proposed that the Regular Process would also “promote technical cooperation, including South-South cooperation;” and “that States and global and regional organizations would be invited to cooperate with each other to identify gaps and shared priorities as a basis for developing a coherent programme to support capacity-building in marine monitoring and assessment”.²

In 2010, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole made recommendations to the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on modalities for the implementation of the Regular Process, including those related to capacity-building.³ The recommendations set forth in paragraphs 17 to 21 of the report of the meeting⁴ were subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly.⁵

¹ Annex to the Report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to recommend a course of action to the General Assembly on the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects (A/64/347).

² Paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of the Report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to recommend a course of action to the General Assembly on the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects (A/63/347).

³ Annex to the Report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (A/65/358).

⁴ Report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (A/65/358).

⁵ A/RES/65/37, para. 200.

Within the framework of the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process,⁶ two Outputs are identified namely, the preparation of a second world ocean assessment and Regular Process support to other ongoing ocean-related processes.

The programme of work highlights a number of activities in respect to achieving capacity-building: the compilation and maintenance of a capacity-building inventory; the holding of regional workshops and their follow-up; and the holding of a multi-stakeholder dialogue / capacity-building partnership event (case studies of good practices).

The first round of five regional workshops in support of the second cycle of the Regular Process was held in 2017. It helped raise awareness about and receive feedback on the output of the first cycle of the Regular Process, the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment or the first World Ocean Assessment⁷ which included the gaps in capacity identified in the Assessment. The regional workshops also served to inform the scoping and preparation phases of the second world ocean assessment and generate interest from the scientific community. Importantly, participants at the regional workshops identified capacity-building needs, including for the conduct of integrated assessments. The summaries of discussions for these workshops are available at: <http://www.un.org/depts/los/rp>.

The programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process provides for two main outputs of the second cycle (2016 to 2020) namely, the preparation of a second world ocean assessment and Regular Process support to other ongoing ocean-related processes.

While the first World Ocean Assessment provided a baseline study of the state of the world's oceans, the second world ocean assessment will extend to evaluating trends and identifying gaps. For the outputs of the Regular Process to be effectively realized, it will be essential for the necessary capacity at national and regional levels to be built in a sustainable manner, based on identified needs. Key to this will be an understanding of what programmes and activities different stakeholders at all levels are undertaking that could support the Regular Process, as well as contribute to the building of relevant capacity.

⁶ A/71/362.

⁷ Published in 2016 in collaboration with Cambridge University Press and available on the website of the Division at http://www.un.org/depts/los/global_reporting/WOA_RegProcess.htm.

Objectives

The Event aims to increase awareness of the importance of the Regular Process, and more generally the science-policy interface at all levels, including with respect to the conduct of integrated assessments. In doing so, it would also contribute to the support and interaction with ongoing ocean-related intergovernmental processes, such as the following: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their related targets; the development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.. Regarding the conduct of integrated assessments, the Event will seek to increase awareness of assessments undertaken at various scales (global, regional and national, as well as thematic), provide relevant lessons learned from best practices at all levels and increase awareness of national, regional and global mechanisms which support assessments and the utilisation of their results to reinforce the science-policy interface at all levels.

It will provide an opportunity for States, global and regional organizations as well as other stakeholders to identify gaps and shared priorities for capacity-building regarding the preparation of integrated assessments as a basis for developing ways to support such capacity-building.

States, relevant United Nations system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes, relevant intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders e.g., industry and civil society representatives, as appropriate, will be able to present information on relevant capacity-building activities they are undertaking.

Overall, it is expected that the Event will provide a forum for the identification of capacity-building needs of States with respect to fulfilling the objectives of the Regular Process, and that it will serve as a platform for enhanced networking, cooperation and the sharing of information and experiences regarding the science-policy interface and the conduct of integrated assessments, within the context of the Regular Process.

Further, the Event is expected to contribute to the identification of synergies and opportunities for cooperation and coordination with respect to capacity-building,

including the identification of other forms of assistance necessary to contribute to the building of the capacity of States to participate in, and make use of, the Regular Process and its outputs. It could facilitate the development of public-private partnerships and create an opportunity for stakeholders to support relevant capacity-building programmes and/or activities.

Additionally, it is anticipated that the role of the “special scholarship fund to support training programmes for developing countries” (established under the Regular Process by the General Assembly through its resolution 64/71) will be more clearly defined as a resource to support the development of capacity at various levels.

Expected Outcome

The outcome will consist of an informal summary of discussions and ideas raised which will be prepared by the secretariat. The summary will include issues that could benefit from further follow-up as a way forward. The advance and unedited text of the summary will be circulated soon after the Event. It will be presented to the twelfth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.

Format of the Event

The Capacity-building Event will consist of four segments. Panellists representing different stakeholders and various areas of expertise, will make short presentations under each segment on relevant aspects. Panellists will be identified with due attention to the need for geographical diversity and gender balance.

The segments of the Event will cover the following:

Segment 1: The importance of integrated assessments for decision-making - this will address the science-policy interface from both the scientific and policy perspectives;

Segment 2: Capacity gaps and needs related to the conduct of integrated assessments - this will provide a synthesis of the identified gaps and needs for enhanced participation in, and use of, the assessments and other outputs of the Regular Process; the importance of data; acquisition, collection, collation and analysis in integrated assessments, building ocean education (the importance of education and ocean literacy); and best practices and lessons learned in preparing integrated assessments;

Segment 3: **Multi-stakeholder discussion on opportunities, best practices and lessons-learned for enhancing the science-policy interface** - this segment would be an interactive discussion on national, regional and global level opportunities, best practices and lessons-learned. It would aim to, among other things:

- Provide examples of how scientific data is successfully transferred into policy decisions, including by communicating science for policy-making and awareness-raising, and associated challenges; and to
- Provide stakeholder perspectives on frameworks for cooperation and coordination with respect to capacity-building, and a platform for discussions on opportunities for synergies.

Segment 4. **Way forward** - this would entail a brief summary of the highlights of the discussions and proposed way forward.

Participants will have an opportunity to engage in interactive dialogues under relevant segments. It is anticipated that an exhibition of projects being undertaken by stakeholders and tools available for the building of capacity in the field of conducting assessments and utilising their results to reinforce the science-policy interface will also be organised in conjunction with the event.

Contacts

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