

**Abstract of views on lessons learned from the first cycle of the Regular Process for  
Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment,  
including Socioeconomic Aspects**  
*Prepared by the secretariat*

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (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 by providing regular assessments at the global and supraregional levels and an integrated view of environmental, economic and social aspects. In the first cycle, the scope of the regular process focused on establishing a baseline, while in subsequent cycles, the scope of the regular process is to extend to evaluating trends.
2. The first cycle of the Regular Process culminated in the preparation and release of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (the “Assessment”), which, together with its Summary (A/70/112), was considered by the sixth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process during its meeting held from 8 to 12 September 2015. The meeting also considered lessons learned and the way forward for the Regular Process. During the discussions, the Working Group took note of the letters of 11 May and 7 September 2015 from the Joint Coordinators to the Co-Chairs (annex II of A/70/418). The secretariat of the Regular Process was also asked to provide a brief overview of the lessons learned on its part.
3. The sixth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, by way of a letter dated 12 October 2015 from the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/70/418), transmitted the Assessment to the seventieth session of the General Assembly. In its resolution 70/235 of 23 December 2015 on “Oceans and the law of the sea”, the General Assembly welcomed with appreciation the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (World Ocean Assessment), and approved its summary, which had been issued as document A/70/112 in June 2015.
4. In paragraph 282 of resolution 70/235, the Assembly requested the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to continue the consideration of lessons learned from the first cycle of the Regular Process with a view to the implementation of the second cycle, including by inviting Member States, observers and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group, through the Co-Chairs, to contribute by sending their views in writing to the Bureau and convening one or more informal open meetings with Member States, observers and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group, and requested the Bureau to inform the Ad Hoc Working Group at its seventh meeting of the views received and to circulate that information in advance of the seventh meeting.
5. By a letter dated 29 January 2016, the Co-Chairs invited Member States, observers and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to submit their views on lessons learned from the first cycle in writing to the Bureau. A letter dated 25 April 2016 extended the deadline for the receipt of submissions until the end of April in order to allow for further input.

6. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as the secretariat of the Regular Process, received 13 submissions on lessons learned from the following Member States and the European Union, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations: (the People's Republic of) China, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, the United States of America, the European Union, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO), and OceanCare.
7. On 6 May 2016, an informal open meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole was convened to build upon the views received and consider a way forward. In this context, consideration was also given to actions required in relation to the follow up of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, including in respect of capacity-building. A second informal open meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole was convened on 10 June 2016.
8. The views received through the written submissions, as well as those expressed at the informal open meetings, are the basis upon which the present Abstract has been compiled. The Abstract also takes into account the discussions that took place within the context of the sixth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole and letters from the Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts addressed to the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on lessons learned from the first cycle of the Regular Process. It does not contain any analysis and has been prepared solely to facilitate discussions at the seventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, in accordance with paragraph 282 of General Assembly resolution 70/235. The views on the lessons learned are organized in the Abstract under 13 main subject areas and are duplicated if they relate to more than one subject area.

#### **I. Duration of the second cycle**

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9. Several delegations noted the need to consider an appropriate schedule for securing sufficient time for writing and reviewing the draft assessment when deciding the overall policy and plan of the second cycle, and were of the opinion that it would not reasonable to undertake a second cycle of less than five years, in view of all the practical work that needs to be carried out, namely the appointment of the Group of Experts; the introduction of any adjustments necessary to the outline of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, particularly in order to fill gaps detected in the overall Assessment coverage; the establishment of the pool of experts and the beginning of the drafting process; and the review by States, a crucial stage where States should be given sufficient time to interact with the Group of Experts on the comments they put forward under the review process. Several delegations expressed the view that a duration of five years would be appropriate for the second cycle, noting that less than five years would result in a rushed completion of the future assessment(s) without an accurate and comprehensive review, while more than five years could result in a loss of engagement and momentum and could lead to delays.

## II. Policy relevance

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10. It was noted that the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment is meant to assist States in policy-making processes on oceans and seas and in building coherent approaches and that sufficient time needed to be given for States, especially developing States, to identify key elements in the Assessment and how to use them in their policy-making. Several delegations expressed the view that the assessment(s) prepared during the second cycle should support policy development and decision-making with regard to both marine and coastal environment aspects, as well as concerning marine and coastal economic activities, including marine spatial planning, and that it/they should also contribute to the fulfilment of relevant commitments that countries have undertaken. Several delegations expressed the view that the assessment(s) prepared during the second cycle should be a reference platform for facilitating practical implementation of ocean-related sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). It was suggested that the length, scope, objectives and guiding principles of the second cycle should be reformulated to enable the use of the outcomes of the assessment(s) prepared during the second cycle to support policy development at national, regional and global levels. A delegation was of the view that some chapters of the Assessment were too narrowly focused, and that policy relevance should be a consideration when defining the scope of chapters in the next assessment.
11. A delegation observed that the Assessment was extremely important at national and regional levels as a means for States to access knowledge to effectively manage their marine environments.
12. A delegation noted that, while the added value of the Assessment in terms of depicting global ocean processes is high, the level of information at the regional level may not be robust enough to support decision-making at that level. It was also noted that, while the Assessment has a great deal of information, integration and synthesis is lacking, which means that the experts will make use of some of the details, but the report is unlikely to have much impact on decision-makers.
13. Several delegations expressed the view that the Assessment should play a decisive supporting role for other United Nations processes, including the process for 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 process, namely by providing data and factual elements to inform debate and decisions, which should therefore reflect the conclusions drawn by the first cycle, as well as the information gathered, the knowledge and capacity-building gaps detected, and trends identified through its work. It was also noted, by an observer delegation, that the Paris Agreement on climate change included regular stock taking of progress towards its goals, with the first stock taking scheduled for the year 2023. In that regard, the assessment(s) under the

Regular Process could be helpful to inform the evaluation of progress made towards the realization of the goals of the Paris Agreement.

14. A delegation recommended the use of a technical summary chapter to focus on significant results, limited to about 20 pages, which would provide clarity on significant policy-relevant results and improve the usefulness of the Assessment for governmental decision-makers, including those at the United Nations.
15. A view was also expressed that the Regular Process should play a supporting role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, particularly of SDG 14, as well as in its follow-up and review, while avoiding duplication and without prejudice to the competences of relevant United Nations bodies on this subject. An observer delegation emphasized that the SDG process could be an important anchor for the Regular Process, since global targets and related indicators have been identified. Thus, the second cycle could provide a mechanism for integrating the measurement of these SDG targets, and the SDG indicators could be further refined and tailored to each region.
16. The high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Fiji, from 5 to 9 June 2017, coinciding with World Oceans Day was considered another opportunity to ensure synergy and build coherent and cognitive approaches.

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17. Several delegations said that the length, scope, objectives and guiding principles of the second cycle should enable the use of the second assessment to support policy development at various geographic levels and should include explicit references and links to regional assessments (A/70/418, paragraph 27).
18. Several delegations stressed that the second cycle of the Regular Process should be more policy-oriented, and subsequent assessments should be drafted to facilitate policy making at all geographical levels. In that regard, several delegations welcomed the idea of identifying certain priorities, from a policy perspective, among the diverse issues faced by the marine environment. The view was expressed that assessments should be policy-relevant rather than policy-prescriptive (A/70/418, paragraph 44).

### **III. Scope**

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19. Some delegations noted that there exist considerable differences in the scope and depth of each chapter of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, and that it would be desirable to ensure uniformity in this regard, to the extent practicable, in the second cycle.
20. It was noted that better definition of scope would avoid duplication of effort across chapters, allow for early integration of sections where the content substantially covers the same ground, and help with author selection. It was further noted that with respect to the bundling of chapters, it should be either by habitat or by ecological topic, but not both. That delegation was also of the view that some chapters of the Assessment were too narrowly focused, and that policy relevance should be a consideration when defining the scope of chapters in the next assessment.

21. It was suggested by some delegations that at the beginning of a cycle, greater attention should be given to the definition of scope and content of each chapter, including the provision of a detailed list of contents, and that the Group of Experts should, as soon as possible and on the basis of the work of the Assessment prepared during the first cycle, set the scope and goals of the assessment(s) of the second cycle, study the latest developments in the evaluation of the marine environment, and analyze insufficiencies in the information and data needed take countermeasures to resolve them .
22. An observer delegation recommended that each subsequent assessment should identify areas where science has improved since the previous assessment and also note areas where further research is required.
23. It was suggested by several delegations that the length, scope, objectives and guiding principles of the second cycle should be reformulated to enable the use of the outcomes of the second assessment to support policy development at national, regional and global levels.
24. An observer delegation noted that the current structure of the Assessment may not be able to respond to regional needs nor inform regional or national ocean governance processes. In that regard, the possibility of developing a dual approach, in which the Regular Process would focus on marine environmental processes of a global nature while providing regions with the capacity to define the scope of the regional inputs based on their priority considerations, was mentioned.
25. That delegation also noted that the implementation of regional workshops in the second cycle could be a mechanism for scoping regional priorities, while another delegation was of the view that the benefit of regional workshops was the potential for wider dissemination of the Assessment.
26. Several delegations noted that while important, regional workshops should not absorb too many resources nor unduly delay the process of the cycle. Similarly, another delegation noted that workshops and peer review were issues that could be considered gradually.
27. A view was expressed by several delegations, including an observer delegation, that the Regular Process should play a supporting role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, particularly of SDG 14, as well as in its follow-up and review, while avoiding duplication and without prejudice to the competences of relevant United Nations bodies on this subject. An observer delegation emphasized that the SDG process could be an important anchor for the Regular Process, since global targets and related indicators have been identified, thus the second cycle could provide a mechanism for integrating the measurement of these SDG targets; the SDG indicators could be further refined and tailored to each region.
28. As a way forward for the second cycle, several delegations expressed the desire for the second cycle to work in coherence with other United Nations processes, (especially the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea and the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292: 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 (BBNJ Preparatory Committee)), with a view to mutually reinforcing each other, which would also be beneficial in examining trends, so as to focus on a number of topics that are relevant to policy makers, especially within the context of the 2030 Agenda.
29. An observer delegation highlighted the need to further elaborate on the impacts of underwater noise, including on species other than marine mammals, the impact of military sonar, and to

recognize that anthropogenic underwater noise is an ocean basin-wide concern requiring broad ecosystem-based solutions.

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30. A delegation noted that there were substantial differences between some of the chapters of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, in terms of scientific quality, length and level of detail (A/70/418, paragraph 16).
31. It was noted that the scope of chapters should be determined in order to avoid duplication and that standardized procedures for providing guidance for writers, quality control, editorial management and peer review should be included in future processes (A/70/418, paragraph 42).
32. A delegation highlighted the need to further consider gap analysis (A/70/418, paragraph 43).

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33. It will be important for work to begin very early in the second cycle to address some gaps in knowledge, to establish quantified baselines and to improve methods of integrated assessment (paragraph 33 (g)).

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34. The second cycle could be organized to address a relatively small number of topics that are of high priority from a policy perspective. For those topics, the assessment(s) could be designed to evaluate trends in key metrics since the assessment was conducted, cross-cutting drivers of change and gaps that were revealed during, and subsequent to, the Assessment prepared during the first cycle. If appropriately focused, the second cycle could require less effort and result in a shorter document (paragraph 16).

#### **IV. Data sources**

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35. It was suggested that the Regular Process could include the input from individuals from Member States through a questionnaire, and that regional input could be sought through use of an inventory on assessments.
36. Recalling the inventory of existing regional assessments compiled by the secretariat of the Regular Process in January 2016 pursuant to paragraph 286 of General Assembly resolution 70/235, some delegations suggested that the secretariat should regularly compile a list of global and regional assessments in order to have an overview of ongoing assessments, and to create links and references and help identify possible synergies. One delegation also noted the possibility of utilizing the inventory of mandates and activities compiled by UN-Oceans, which could be an important resource.
37. The importance of investing in approaches to facilitate the assembly of data to make the process less arduous and timelier was highlighted.

38. Several delegations noted that during the preparation of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, a series of regional workshops was convened, which not only publicized the Assessment programme very effectively, but also made an important achievement by collecting a large amount of valuable regional-level information and data. In that regard, they suggested that in the assessments of the second cycle, writing teams be enabled to make fuller use of the results of the regional workshops, collect relevant regional data, and more fully mobilize and bring into play the roles of regional organizations.
39. One delegation was of the view that the Assessment seems to be based primarily on data from international scientific journals and international programmes, and advised that the second cycle expand its data source to national reports and regional programmes, and to ensure wider participation of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations along with many national and regional institutes, and to also include more data on socioeconomic aspects.
40. One delegation recommended considering the work of the Ocean Health Index. It was suggested by an observer delegation that the Global Ocean Science Report, under the umbrella of the IOC Assembly, could inform the capacity development strategy of the Regular Process in its second cycle.
41. Some delegations noted with concern the lack of references cited for the information provided, and recommended that citing references should be the standard for all information presented. A delegation noted the importance of ensuring that data provided under various groups be authenticated and checked for quality.
42. Another delegation suggested that the scientific quality, consistency and veracity of information in chapters would be improved if data quality standards were issued in the guidelines for writing teams, including guidelines for length, referencing, data quality and process.

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43. One delegation noted areas of the Assessment in which existing data were not sufficient or had not been fully explored. Several delegations suggested comprehensive and extensive use of regional assessments to avoid overlap and ensure consistency among regional assessments and the work of the second cycle. One delegation suggested a database-driven reporting system with key indicators/data to facilitate the long-term success of the Regular Process. The importance of defining baseline indicators that were harmonized and comparable across regions and that would allow for integration and consistent assessment of trends in future cycles was underlined (A/70/418, paragraph 43).
44. The secretariat of the Regular Process was requested to compile an inventory of available information on recent and ongoing assessments and other processes at the regional and global levels relevant to the Regular Process for presentation to the Bureau by the end of February 2016. It was noted that the assistance of UN-Oceans would be instrumental in that endeavour (A/70/418, paragraph 33).

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45. The eight regional workshops in support of the Regular Process workshops were successful in spreading knowledge about the Regular Process and in assembling useful information for the Assessment (paragraph 28).
46. Where Regional Seas organizations exist, they need to be brought into a closer relationship with the Regular Process. Where regional assessments are appropriate, work at the regional level should be strengthened to produce regional assessments, using a common methodology, as inputs to the global synthesis (paragraph 15 (a)).
47. The absence of a clear commitment of resources made it impossible to purchase information that was only available only from databases that required payment, such as that of the World Tourism Organization (paragraph 19).
48. Resources should be available to purchase access to commercial databases and periodicals and other publications from which information is not freely available (paragraph 33 (l)).

#### **V. Working Group and its Bureau**

*Letter dated 11 May 2015 from the Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts addressed to the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole*

49. In general, the arrangements of the Working Group, its Bureau, the Group of Experts and the pool of experts have been the right general structure. However, there are many points on which improvements are needed, especially in the provision of supporting resources (paragraph 2).
50. As the bodies responsible for managing the Regular Process, the Working Group and its Bureau need to have a consistent approach. To begin with, there were relatively frequent changes in the Co-Chairs of the Working Group; there is a strong case for appointing the Co-Chairs for several years at a time, rather than year by year (paragraph 3).

#### **VI. Group of Experts and pool of experts (appointment and composition)**

##### **(a) Group of Experts**

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51. Several delegations noted the need for more diversity in the professional backgrounds of the members of the Group of Experts, in particular economic and social aspects. They suggested that the broadest possible range of the disciplines needed to carry out the assessment be represented, and that multi-disciplinary balance be given full consideration, especially with regard to the need for more experts from the socioeconomic fields. Further, it was noted by several delegations that geographical representation was very important because it would provide legitimacy to the Process. A delegation considered that a specific proportion of existing members of the Group of Experts from the first cycle should remain for the duration of the second cycle, so that the second cycle's Group of Experts could familiarize themselves with the Regular Process with as little delay as possible, but cautioned that the principle that no member



of the Group of Experts may serve more than two successive terms be observed, to avoid stagnation and the stifling of innovation.

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52. A number of delegations emphasized that some level of continuity in the Group of Experts and the Bureau, in particular among the Co-Chairs, as well as more engagement on the part of the Bureau, from the beginning of the cycle, would be desirable in the future. In that regard, it was agreed that members who served on the Group of Experts for the first cycle would be asked for advice, and the letters annexed to the report of the sixth meeting would be reviewed, in the consideration of the lessons learned in advance of the seventh meeting of the Working Group (A/70/418, paragraphs 31 and 32).
53. One delegation echoed the concerns of the Group of Experts concerning the limited participation by experts from certain disciplines, in particular the social and economic sciences (A/70/418, paragraph 37).

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54. While the present method of appointing the Group of Experts has worked well, it would be good if the full complement of 25 members were appointed, there were more representation of economic and social experts alongside marine science and, there were a balance between new appointments to the Group and continuation of those involved in the first cycle (paragraph 33 (d) (i) and (ii)).
55. Although the overall structure of the Working Group, the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the pool of experts has been demonstrated to work adequately, it would be helpful if the Group of Experts were assured of continuity in the composition of the group throughout the cycle (paragraph 33 (c)(ii)).
56. If the Group of Experts is to have coordinators, any coordinator in full-time employment should be given sufficient time away from that job to carry out the coordination work (paragraph 33 (e)).

(b) Pool of experts

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57. The lack of geographic representation of members of the pool of experts was noted. It was underlined that for the second cycle to be successful, it was imperative that experts from all over the world be given the opportunity to participate, especially those from least developed countries and SIDS. An observer delegation suggested that regional presentations and workshops could help improve this problem. The uneven distribution of the areas of expertise among members of the pool of experts, with clearly insufficient numbers of experts in certain areas, was also highlighted as problematic by several delegations. It was suggested by a delegation that, for the second cycle, requirements for fields of expertise should be set up as

- early as possible for members of the pool of experts, so as to provide guidance for Member States in nominating experts and enable the timely replenishment of new pool of experts.
58. It was also suggested by some delegations that appropriate measures be explored in the early stages for nominating an adequate number of experts for the second cycle. It was noted by an observer delegation that in many countries, there was no link between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and technical ministries, thus a nomination process exclusively through the Ministries of Foreign Affairs would not only be slow, but also not representative of available expertise. One delegation noted that communication in each regional group was sometimes not immediately shared with all other related States and organizations.
  59. Several delegations also suggested that the process to nominate experts be streamlined in order to promote a more swift communication through the regional groups. One observer delegation proposed the establishment of national focal points to act as a liaison between the global process and the national scientific community of a given country, which could provide an entry point at the national level for scientists to engage in the process. That delegation further noted that the IOC's network of 148 national focal points could be activated to mobilise the scientific community at the national level to assist with the nomination of Experts to the Pool.
  60. One delegation suggested that, since the Group of Experts would provide substantial management and oversight, it was necessary for members of the pool of experts to know the scientific attributes of the Group of Experts, and suggested that the secretariat place a biographical sketch of each member of the Group of Experts on its website, to increase transparency and attract more members to the pool of experts.

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61. With regard to the process of appointments to the pool of experts and the shortcomings highlighted by the Joint Coordinators, delegations recognized the shortcomings and noted the importance of addressing the appointment process through regional groups in order to expedite the process. One delegation suggested that there might be a need to either adopt a mechanism to streamline the existing process or to adopt different processes. In that regard, another delegation emphasized that a clear, transparent and structured process was essential for the success of the second cycle. Several delegations voiced support for the appointment of national contact points. Some welcomed suggestions by the Group of Experts concerning the future possibility of a process to electronically transmit nominations for the pool of experts in order to facilitate access to information about the nominees (A/70/418, paragraph 36).

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62. A large part of the problem stemmed from the mechanism chosen for nominating the members of the pool of experts. This required States to present their nominations through their Permanent Missions in New York, which then submitted them to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea through the Regional Groups. In some cases, the process was not fully understood, and nominations were therefore delayed. In addition, the regional groups and their Chairs (who changed monthly) often lacked the resources to play their part. In certain

instances, nominations were also initially seen as part of the regular elections process and were held up for negotiations as part of that process (paragraph 13).

63. The pool of experts should be maintained, but efforts should be made to clarify the commitments that its members make to the work, to improve communications with them and to keep them informed (paragraph 33 (f)).

## **VII. Preparation of assessments**

### **(a) Selection and engagement of the pool of experts**

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64. One delegation expressed concern that the process of selecting the members of writing teams was not clear in the first cycle, with some experts selected from outside of the pool of experts and others appointed as members of the pool of experts after finishing the drafting. That delegation noted that in the drafting process of outcome documents, the members of writing teams, commentators and peer reviewers should be selected from the pool of experts, and that this process should be clear and transparent.
65. Another delegation expressed the view that writing teams be limited to a modest number and led by a subject-matter expert, and that specific criteria for lead authors be considered, including in relation to experience with authoring and co-authoring peer-reviewed publications in the subject of the chapter. Another delegation recommended selecting more lead authors from the pool of experts, which would encourage global participation, build capacity, and represent a wider range of knowledge. That delegation also noted that many chapters had no more than two authors, and additional authors would have improved the chapter contents.
66. One delegation expressed concern over the broad lack of enthusiasm in working on the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment among members of the pool of experts, noting that a correspondingly small number of them showed any willingness to take on the writing tasks, and highlighted the need to get more experts to participate actively. It was requested that Member States take a variety of measures to encourage participation in relevant assessment work on the part of the pool members that they nominate. It was noted by some delegations that lack of financial compensation and lack of visibility of the Regular Process were also issues that limited the engagement of scientists.
67. It was noted by a delegation that in the past cycle, the pool of experts had a long time interval of inactivity, then too much work in too short of a time interval, and there was also a pattern of changing instructions and team membership. In that regard, it was suggested that an organized work plan, implemented linearly, could help retain the interest and commitment of authors from the pool of experts.

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68. Most of the personal history forms for members of the pool of experts were presented to the Division as paper documents. This meant that it was not possible to search through the forms for people who had publications to their credit in specific fields except by a laborious manual

search, for which staff time was not available. An effective electronic system for nominations needs to be established, linked to the subsequent communications system between the Group of Experts and the members of the pool of experts (paragraph 14).

69. After the pool of experts had been constituted, it proved, in many cases, to be very difficult to mobilize experts from the pool to join teams to write chapters. Partly this was, no doubt, due to the loss of motivation, as described above. Partly it was also due to the fact that, while many members of the pool of experts were prepared to act as commentators or peer reviewers, few were ready to join writing teams to prepare drafts (paragraph 20).
70. The workshops were initiated well before the pool of experts was in place and there were no effective links between the pool and the workshops, which diminished the effectiveness of the workshops. It would have helped if members of the pool of experts could have been included regularly among those attending the workshops (paragraph 28).

(b) Structure of assessments and guidelines for their preparation

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71. A delegation suggested that the authors from the pool of experts should be more involved in the design of the structure of the chapters of an assessment.
72. Some delegations, noting that a thorough scientific treatment of the available data inevitably leads to a long report, expressed the view that synthesis and summary components would be critical for the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment. A delegation recommended the use of a technical summary chapter to focus on significant results, limited to about 20 pages, which would provide clarity of significant policy-relevant results and improve the usefulness of the assessment for governmental decision-makers, including those at the United Nations.
73. The use of clear and attractive figures as an aid to readers was encouraged by an observer delegation
74. It was also observed that cross-referencing of material between chapters is a best practice, but absent in the Assessment. A delegation noted the importance of ensuring that data provided under various groups be authenticated and checked for quality. A delegation also noted that poor formatting, quality control, and proofreading were also problems in the first Assessment.
75. It was suggested that guidelines on process for writing teams, including communication standards, be more clearly stated at the outset of the cycle, and that clear and achievable timeframes should be set early on. A delegation further noted that each author of chapters should have clearly defined responsibilities in order to ensure work is well coordinated and the contributions of each author should be clearly stated in drafts and revisions.

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76. The body chosen to take the expert lead in the next cycle should initially concentrate efforts on simplifying the structure of the assessment in order to enhance the integration and the policy-relevant aspects of the second assessment as a whole (paragraph 15 (d)).

(c) Communication, including writing teams

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77. Several delegations noted the need to strengthen exchange and communication among members of the writing teams. It was noted that regular communication throughout the drafting process could also encourage substantive participation of experts from the pool.
78. Several delegations suggested setting up smoother communication and exchange between the pool of experts and the Group of Experts, as well as the secretariat, and holding periodic exchange activities and meetings, thereby allowing members of the pool of experts to keep abreast of the development and requirements of the programme and participate more effectively in its implementation. One delegation suggested using a contact point or focal point to improve correspondence between the secretariat and the members of the pool of experts.
79. It was noted, by an observer delegation, that the lack of resources for face-to-face meetings of chapter lead authors and co-authors was a problem that made coordination difficult. Another delegation suggested regular teleconference meetings, organized by the lead authors, to allow the authors to share chapter drafts.
80. One delegation suggested that summaries of all meetings of the Group of Experts be distributed by the secretariat to the Bureau, which would strengthen intellectual connections between the contributors to a chapter and enable improved decision-making within the Bureau. It was further suggested that the Group of Experts issue a status report on the progress of the assessment at frequent times in the period between meetings of the Group of Experts.

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81. The importance of holding workshops for writing teams, which would allow them to meet in person, potentially at the beginning and during the middle of the writing phase, was emphasized. It was observed that regional workshops could help to avoid overlap among chapters. In that regard, it was noted that the scope of chapters should be determined in order to avoid duplication and that standardized procedures for providing guidance for writers, quality control, editorial management and peer review should be included in future processes (A/70/418, paragraph 42).

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82. The absence of a clear commitment of resources had a wide range of effects. It made it difficult to schedule meetings of the Group of Experts well in advance (paragraph 19 (b)) and impossible to organize meetings of writing teams (paragraph 19 (d)). There were also no funds to provide for meetings of writing teams (paragraph 23). Provision should be made in the second cycle for meetings of small groups of experts engaged in specific projects or producing components for the next assessment(s). If writing teams are used for the second cycle, there should be meetings of at least some of those teams (paragraph 33(k)).
83. A separate system, provided by the United Nations Secretariat for communication among the members of the Group of Experts, was not very successful. Unite Connections also proved to be

difficult to use. In the end, it proved to be more effective to use ordinary e-mail and the free service of Dropbox. More attention will be needed to be paid to providing more effective means of communication between members of the Group of Experts that will allow them to work collectively on the same document (paragraph 27).

84. Communications with members of the pool of experts proved to be difficult. They were, of course, asked to provide e-mail addresses, but messages sent to them often did not yield responses. It could be useful if Governments were able to designate a national contact point to facilitate communication with members of the pool (paragraph 16). Problems with the website also meant that it was not possible to get back to people who had been nominated to the pool for the better part of a year. This gave many of the experts the feeling that the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment was not a serious undertaking, and, therefore, made them unwilling to devote time and effort to it (paragraph 15).
85. Efforts should be made to clarify the commitments that the members of the pool of experts make to the work, to improve communications with them and to keep them informed (paragraph 33 (f)).
86. There should be an early round of regional workshops, which should involve the members of the pool of experts, and which should enable dialogue on what the Assessment has delivered (paragraph 33 (h)).
87. The secretariat should be strengthened so that it can provide technical and scientific support on the work, ensure proper follow-up to regional workshops and develop means of communication (paragraph 33 (j)).
88. From the start, it was agreed that the Regular Process would require a website for communications with the members of the pool of experts and with the general public. Resources were found to establish that website through the good offices of Australia, Norway and UNEP/GRID Arendal. Unfortunately, there was a long delay between agreements to establish the website and provide resources and the actual availability of the website. That delay was due to the need to establish formal agreements between the United Nations Secretariat, Norway and UNEP/GRID Arendal regarding the legal status of the website. That delay probably contributed to a lack of enthusiasm among the members of the pool (paragraph 25).
89. Much care went into the selection of Editorial Manager as the software system for managing the chapter texts and communicating with the pool of experts. However, for various reasons, largely relating to the fact that the system was not particularly suited to handling texts in the process of drafting and revision, and that resources were not available for training the members of the Group of Experts in the use of the software, the system ultimately made a much smaller contribution to the work than had been hoped (paragraph 26).
90. Methods of communication should be improved between members of the Group of Experts and with the members of the pool of experts, as well as with both the scientific community and the general public. To that end, the website should have a designated manager and a relevant social media presence should be developed. It would also help if the designation of national contact points were considered (paragraph 33 (i)).

## VIII. Outreach and awareness-raising

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91. In considering the second cycle, Delegations expressed the view that greater effort needed to be made to ensure the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment is widely publicized, in order to ensure that the scientific community remains engaged and to encourage consideration of the Assessment findings by States, including through relevant regional and international bodies, with respect to informing management, policy and capacity-building decisions. It was noted that the publication of the Assessment would help in further disseminating results of the first cycle, and that civil society could assist in promoting the results of the Assessment through materials suitable for the general public.
92. Awareness-raising was seen as a key priority for the secretariat as well as for States. Several delegations suggested the use of ocean conferences to publicize the Assessment and provide scientific information and knowledge to Member States to enable them to prepare their positions and contributions during those processes. In this regard, the Secretariat was encouraged to consider hosting promotional side events at relevant ocean meetings, for example, the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Fiji, while States were encouraged to consider how the Assessment was relevant to other bodies they are part of, like regional fisheries management organizations/arrangements and how awareness-raising events could be held in these bodies.
93. Additionally, States were encouraged to consider ways to raise awareness about the Assessment domestically among the general public, including with regard to how many other assessments have been carried out at regional and global level and to assist in identifying how such assessments can complement each other. The importance of continuous updates from the secretariat of the Regular Process with regard to awareness-raising activities was noted by several delegations.
94. It was noted that States, international organizations, and the United Nations system should share information on meetings held in order to follow up on the Assessment within their own policy frameworks. It was suggested that the media department of the United Nations Secretariat and of other United Nations agencies involved in the implementation of the Regular Process could collaborate to achieve greater visibility for the process, including by launching events in various parts of the world and/or at global ocean events. Investing in publication design and presentation was also identified, by an observer delegation, as a way to increase the utility and uptake of the publication.
95. The need to establish partnerships with different types of stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and institutes at national and regional levels, was also highlighted by a number of delegations.

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96. It was noted that the interest of scientists in participating in the second cycle would depend on the extent of dissemination and communication of the results of the first cycle to the scientific community and the general public. It was also suggested that summary documents should be accessible to the broader public and policy-makers (A/70/418, paragraph 38).

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97. Although the website was established and populated with much information on the first Assessment, the resources needed to make it an effective means of communication with the scientific community and the general public were insufficient. Nor were there resources to develop systems of communication through social media. The absence of such methods of communication undermined the task of securing commitment from the scientific community and the general public (paragraph 31).
98. To date, it has not been possible to set up ways of communicating the results of the Assessment to Governments, the scientific community and the general public. Doing so is essential to preventing the dissipation of the achievements of the Assessment (paragraph 32).
99. A critical first step towards the second cycle is to make Governments, the scientific community and the general public aware of the results of the first cycle. It will not suffice simply to send a note verbale to the Permanent Missions in New York, to make it available on the website and to publish it through the Cambridge University Press. There needs to be a concerted effort to draw attention to it, in particular through presentations at appropriate scientific meetings and congresses. Funds will be needed to enable this effort (paragraph 33 (b)).

## **IX. Review process**

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100. It was emphasized that a robust review process was an important component to the scientific method to produce a science report, and while the United Nations guidelines on the internal review process aligned with the goals of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, these guidelines were not adhered to in the first cycle.
101. Several delegations underlined that the review by States was a crucial stage where States should be given sufficient time to interact with the Group of Experts on the comments they put forward under the review process. A delegation expressed the view that there was insufficient time for review, and an optimal review process would be to first conduct the external peer review, then allow for adjustment of the draft, and then conduct the States review, as opposed to doing any of the three concurrently. Another delegation considered it problematic that Member States were not given the opportunity to make any comment on the elements which were newly introduced only in the second draft of the first Assessment. That delegation emphasized that it was imperative to ensure better communication between writing teams and Member States in order to enhance legitimacy and wider acceptance by Member States as well as by the international community, including the scientific community. A third delegation noted that Member States did not know who were selected as peer reviewers, and they were not provided with information on the status of the draft report, which had been revised in the light



of the comments from Member States and peer reviewers. It was suggested that this process be more transparent, with updates on the progress of the review process.

102. One delegation noted that while contributors expressed the view that the line by line feedback tool facilitated responses to reviewers, others, particularly reviewers, felt it did not allow scope to provide comprehensive feedback and many reviewers opted to give comprehensive feedback in the comments section of the feedback tool, rather than line by line. That delegation suggested considering how a feedback tool can sensibly provide for each type of feedback.
103. The view was further expressed that a more structured and consistently applied, formal review process would better ensure quality, efficiency and transparency, including through the use of editorial management systems and conventional best-practice protocols.

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104. One delegation noted that, while States had been offered the opportunity to comment on the first draft of the Assessment and seek clarification from the Group of Experts, similar opportunities had not been provided in the case of the second draft, especially with respect to newly added material. Another delegation noted that, while conscious of the need to ensure the scientific independence of the Assessment, additional interaction with regard to comments might be needed to satisfy the concerns of States (A/70/418, paragraph 39).
105. It was noted that some peer reviewers had found the peer review process complicated owing to differences in quality between chapters and, in some cases, the lack of feedback as to how their comments had been taken into account. It was also unclear whether all chapters had been subject to a thorough scientific technical review before being submitted for review by Member States. In that respect, the view was expressed that there was a need for a more formal, structured and transparent peer review process, perhaps one drawing on existing editorial management systems (A/70/418, paragraph 40).

#### **X. Cooperation and interaction with other bodies**

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106. It was suggested by some delegations that communications among various States in each region be improved, and regional organizations be more involved in the second cycle.
107. Several delegations emphasized the importance of building on the work done (or still being carried out) by different relevant assessment processes in different regions, and suggested that the secretariat help identify those processes, so that future work could benefit from the mutual interaction with them, bearing in mind the global coverage and universal nature of the assessment, under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly.
108. It was noted, including by an observer delegation that, while the General Assembly, in its resolutions, has invited relevant United Nations bodies to provide technical and scientific support to the process, the wealth of information and expertise in various aspects of ocean assessment of these bodies had not been used to their maximum. In that regard, it was suggested by an observer delegation that the establishment of an inter-agency secretariat shared amongst various agencies and working under the coordination of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, could capture the contribution and expertise of these bodies and strengthen the resource base of the Regular Process. That delegation also suggested that a

mechanism could be defined to engage non-United Nations scientific and technical organizations that have a mandate in marine science, assessment, and capacity-building.

109. It was further noted by that observer delegation that, since all meetings of the Group of Experts have taken place in New York, the participation of agencies based outside of New York has been limited. In that regard, that observer delegation recommended using the model adopted during the conduct of the “Assessment of Assessment” whereby each agency agreed to host one meeting of the Group of Expert (meetings where hosted in Paris (IOC), London (IMO), Geneva (WMO) and Rome (FAO)), which would promote stronger engagement of those technical agencies and possibly create opportunities for co-financing the meetings, hence increasing the resource base of the process.
110. One delegation recommended considering the work of the Ocean Health Index. It was suggested by an observer delegation that the Global Ocean Science Report, under the umbrella of the IOC Assembly, could inform the capacity development strategy of the Regular Process in its second cycle. That delegation also noted that a specific training programme could be developed to support the implementation of the second cycle, and in that regard, the IOC, through its Regional Subsidiary Bodies and the IODE’s Ocean Teacher Global Academy, could provide a mechanism for delivering these trainings in various regions via its networks of inter-connected Regional Training and research Centres and national institutions.
111. Another observer delegation noted that it was leading a number of assessments, which could support the next phases of the Regular Process. That observer delegation suggested that any invitation to provide scientific and technical support should be clearly defined so that relevant organizations could include such invitation in their programmes of work and the necessary budgetary support could be provided.
112. It was noted that States, international organizations, and the United Nations system should share information on meetings held in order to follow up on the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment within their own policy frameworks. As a way forward for the second cycle, several delegations expressed the desire for the second cycle to work in coherence with other United Nations processes (especially the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea and the BBNJ Preparatory Committee), with a view to mutually reinforcing each other, which would also be beneficial in examining trends, so as to focus on a number of topics that are relevant to policy makers, especially within the context of the 2030 Agenda.

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113. Several delegations recognized the support provided by the secretariats of other intergovernmental organizations, in particular IOC-UNESCO and UNEP (A/70/418, paragraph 11).
114. Delegations recalled that the General Assembly had recognized the importance of ensuring mutual support and avoidance of duplication of effort between the Assessment and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Reference was also made to other ongoing assessments of relevance to the Regular Process and how important it was to carry out a survey of recent and ongoing assessments (A/70/418, paragraph 28).
115. Similarly, it was noted that the second cycle should also aim at ensuring its coherence and mutual reinforcement with all other relevant United Nations processes, including the United

Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea and the implementation of SDG 14 on oceans. As a concrete step, it was suggested that the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment could be presented to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at its next meeting, in 2016. It was also noted by several delegations that standardized measurements could help to avoid duplication and improve cohesion (A/70/418, paragraph 29).

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116. One way of encouraging concerted action would be for the General Assembly to draw the attention of the specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system to the first Assessment and to invite them to inform the Assembly of how their current programmes of work address the issues identified and what changes they might consider in the light of the Assessment (paragraph 8).
117. It is critical that an analysis be undertaken of any gaps in addressing the challenges highlighted in the first Assessment that fall between the work of the various specialized agencies and programmes. UN-Oceans would perhaps be best placed to carry out such a gap analysis, although some external input could also be useful (paragraph 9). The responses of the specialized agencies and programmes, together with the gap analysis, could then provide the basis for the General Assembly to review the situation and to take or to propose any actions that might be desirable. The United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea could perhaps play a part in preparing such discussions in the Assembly (paragraph 10).
118. Where Regional Seas organizations exist, they need to be brought into a closer relationship with the Regular Process. Where regional assessments are appropriate, work at the regional level should be strengthened to produce regional assessments, using a common methodology, as inputs to the global synthesis (paragraph 15 (a)).

## **XI. Workshops**

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119. Several delegations noted that during the first cycle a series of regional workshops was convened, which not only publicized the assessment very effectively, but also made an important achievement by collecting a large amount of valuable regional-level information and data. It was noted however, that some of the regional workshops were held before the pool of experts had even begun its work, with some chapter-report writers unable to attend the regional workshops as a result, and because the organization and publicizing of regional-workshop results were delayed in the later stages, those results could not fulfil the role expected of them during the first cycle of the Regular Process.
120. An observer delegation noted that the implementation of regional workshops in the second cycle could be a mechanism for scoping regional priorities, while another delegation was of the view that the benefit of regional workshops was the potential for wider dissemination of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment.

121. Several delegations noted that while important, regional workshops should not absorb too many resources nor unduly delay the process of the cycle. Similarly, another delegation noted that workshops and peer review were issues that could be considered gradually.
122. It was suggested by several delegations that in the assessment(s) prepared during the second cycle, writing teams be enabled to make fuller use of the results of the regional workshops, collect relevant regional data, and more fully mobilize and bring into play the roles of regional organizations. Several delegations considered that efforts should be made to encourage the interest of countries or international organizations in different regions to organize workshops, ensuring the widest participation possible of experts in the region and encouraging their involvement in the process. It was noted by an observer delegation that the implementation of regional workshops in the second cycle could be a mechanism for scoping regional priorities. Several delegations emphasized that possible delays in establishing the outcomes of workshops should not prevent appropriate and timely decisions on the orientation and content of the assessment(s) prepared during the second cycle.

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123. There were eight regional workshops in support of the Regular Process, hosted by Australia, Belgium, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Mozambique and the United States of America, respectively. The workshops were successful in spreading knowledge about the Regular Process and in assembling useful information for the first Assessment. The host Governments thus made significant contributions to the Regular Process. The workshops could have made an even greater contribution had there been greater support from the secretariat for them. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea put a great deal of effort into organizing the workshops, but could not provide sufficient staff to ensure really good follow-up. Furthermore, because the workshops were initiated well before the pool of experts was in place, there were no effective links between the pool and the workshops, which diminished the effectiveness of the workshops. It would have helped if members of the pool could have been included regularly among those attending the workshops (paragraph 28).
124. There should be an early round of regional workshops, which should involve the members of the pool of experts, and which should enable dialogue on what the Assessment has delivered and how the work should be organized (paragraph 33 (h)).
125. The secretariat should be strengthened so that it can provide technical and scientific support on the work, ensure proper follow-up to regional workshops and develop means of communication (paragraph 33 (j)).

## **XII. Resources (and funding)<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The secretariat would like to note that several paragraphs in this compilation are relevant to the issue of resources and funding, which is considered to be a cross-cutting issue.

126. Several delegations noted that insufficient funding, inadequate financial and human resources, presented a risk to future assessment cycles. An observer delegation noted that the large, uncompensated time commitment of the Regular Process could discourage qualified scientists from participating.
127. It was advised by some delegations that plans be made early in the second cycle to set aside a certain amount of time and money to convene meetings on drafting key or important chapters of future assessment(s), so as to further enhance the scientific value of the such assessment(s).
128. While commending the experts and the secretariat for completing the first cycle with limited resources, several delegations emphasized the need to review the funding method in considering the actual estimates of the overall resources requirements for the second cycle, including to facilitate participation of experts from developing States. Some delegations suggested that the General Assembly should ensure there are dedicated resources in the regular budget for the second cycle, including to guarantee the ability of the experts to meet as required and to access the necessary data. States were encouraged to consider contributing to the voluntary Trust Fund.
129. An observer delegation indicated that financing models of other global assessments, such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, could be relevant.

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130. Several delegations expressed concern over the scarcity of financial resources for the Regular Process, recalling that they had supported the consideration of the allocation of resources through the regular budget. They noted that accommodations had had to be made owing to lack of resources, such as the translation into all official languages of only the summary. In that regard, they voiced their continued support for providing additional resources to further strengthen the capacity of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, in particular its human resources, to enable it to continue performing high quality work as the secretariat of the Regular Process. Some delegations recalled the importance of the voluntary trust fund for the purpose of supporting the operations of the Regular Process and announced that they had contributed to the fund. It was stressed by several delegations that a budgetary allocation was important for the continuation of the Regular Process (A/70/418, paragraph 21).
131. The lack of resources and its impact upon the first cycle of the Regular Process were mentioned by the Joint Coordinators and reflected in their letters to the Co-Chairs. The secretariat highlighted, in particular, the constrained resources that had had to be redeployed in the organization of the meetings of the Working Group and the established institutions; the organization of the workshops in the regions; the support to the Joint Coordinators and lead members in the preparation of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment; the transmission of the Assessment for comment by Member States, intergovernmental organizations and peer reviewers; the review of the summary and revised chapters leading to the finalization of the advance and unedited text; and the administration of the voluntary trust fund, including fundraising (A/70/418, paragraph 24).
132. With respect to the funding of the second cycle, delegations, having noted the significant human and financial resource constraints under which the first cycle of the Regular Process was conducted, considered the various ways in which funding could be provided for the second cycle. The possibilities mentioned included fully funding the second cycle through a regular

budget allocation or through a combination of a regular budget and voluntary contributions. Several delegations endorsed the call by the Group of Experts for more resources to be deployed to the secretariat in order to assist the Regular Process. Information was requested regarding the budget constraints experienced by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea as the secretariat of the Regular Process (A/70/418, paragraph 34).

133. The Working Group considered that the overall resource requirements for the second cycle of the Regular Process would need to be prepared in advance of the seventh meeting of the Working Group, following informal open meetings with Member States, observers and other participants in the Working Group regarding the implementation of the second cycle (A/70/418, paragraph 35).

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134. The question of the resources needed to carry out the Assessment effectively was never properly addressed. States, non-governmental organizations and foundations were invited repeatedly to contribute to the Voluntary Trust Fund that was set up. Some States made contributions without further pressure, and efforts by the coordinators and the Division mobilized some further contributions (paragraph 17).
135. The Group of Experts was asked by the Co-Chairs in April 2012 for an indication of the resources that would be needed. A budgetary indication was produced. That was not a proper budget, but rather a back-of-the-envelope calculation to give some indication of the type of financial support that would be needed and its scale. The budgetary indication was not circulated to the Working Group until several months later and was never discussed. The only resources raised for the Voluntary Trust Fund have had to be devoted to meeting the costs of members from developing countries to attend meetings of the Group (paragraph 18).
136. Resources should be available to purchase access to commercial databases and periodicals and other publications from which information is not freely available (paragraph 33(l)).

### **XIII. Capacity-building**

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137. One delegation indicated that, capacity-building, with regard to the preparation of the assessment includes not only providing developing countries with technology transfers, skills training and guidance in fully utilizing the results of the assessment, but also strengthening their own assessment of capacity-building needs and solving the problems caused by insufficiency of the information and data needed for the assessment. The Group of Experts should, as soon as possible and on the basis of the work of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment prepared during the first cycle, set the scope and goals of the assessment(s) to be prepared during the second cycle, study the latest developments in the comprehensive evaluation of the marine environment, and analyze insufficiencies in the information and data needed for the assessment and take countermeasures to resolve them, so as to better complete the work of the assessment(s) to be prepared during the second cycle.

138. Some delegations expressed the view that greater effort needed to be made to encourage consideration of the Assessment findings by States, including through relevant regional and international bodies, with respect to informing management, policy and capacity-building decisions.
139. Many delegations expressed the view that the Assessment should play a decisive supporting role for other United Nations processes, namely by providing data and factual elements to inform debate and decisions, which should therefore reflect the conclusions drawn by the first cycle, as well as the information gathered, the knowledge and capacity-building gaps detected, and trends identified through its work. It was noted by several delegations that this aspect of the Assessment, together with the preliminary inventory of regional assessments, would be helpful in considering the issue of capacity-building and transfer of marine technology within the context of the BBNJ Preparatory Committee.
140. The dual purpose of the Assessment for knowledge management and capacity-building was underscored, with a suggestion that avenues be explored in the way forward to engage regional and national organizations, including academic institutions with relevant expertise, since they could both contribute to, and gain from, capacity-building and transfer of technology. It was suggested by an observer delegation that the Global Ocean Science Report, under the umbrella of the IOC Assembly, could inform the capacity development strategy of the Regular Process in its second cycle.

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141. Noting the call from the Group of Experts for regional workshops, several delegations expressed support for the idea of beginning the next phase with such workshops. It was noted that the workshops would bring together scientists, lawyers and policy-makers, among others, and provide an indication of how different areas of expertise could contribute to the work of the Regular Process and, specifically, to the second cycle. Some delegations recalled that capacity-building was one of the core objectives of the Regular Process, and that workshops had assisted in that regard (A/70/418, paragraph 41).

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142. An important element of the Assessment has been the identification of gaps in knowledge and in capacities (and of the related opportunities for capacity-building and technology transfer) both for assessment and management purposes. It therefore seems important that the follow-up should pay special attention to the task of addressing those gaps. The initial inventory of capacity-building compiled by the Division can be a useful basis for this task (paragraph 13).

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143. The focus of the Regular Process on capacity-building implies that there should be a coherent approach to reporting on progress in capacity-building specifically (paragraph 15 (c)).