

Annex III of A/67/87

Terms of reference and working methods for the Group of Experts of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 180 of its resolution 64/71, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to invite the Chairs of the regional groups to constitute a group of experts, ensuring adequate expertise and geographical distribution, comprised of a maximum of 25 experts and no more than 5 experts per regional group, for a period up to and including the informal meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to be held from 30 August to 3 September 2010.
2. In its paragraph 209 of its resolution 65/37 A, the General Assembly decided to establish a group of experts to be an integral part of the Regular Process and requested the members of the Group of Experts, who had been appointed by Member States pursuant to paragraph 180 of resolution 64/71, to continue serving on the Group of Experts for the duration of the first phase of the first assessment cycle, and encouraged regional groups that had not yet done so to appoint experts to the Group of Experts in accordance with paragraph 180 of resolution 64/71.
3. The present document, prepared by the secretariat of the Regular Process in consultation with the Group of Experts, defines the terms of reference for the experts appointed to, or to be appointed to, the Group of Experts.

II. Terms of reference

4. The general task of the Group of Experts shall be to carry out any assessments within the framework of the Regular Process at the request of the General Assembly^a under the supervision of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole. In particular, the tasks of the Group of Experts shall be:
 - (a) To draft an outline of questions to be considered in the main assessment to be undertaken in each cycle of the Regular Process, for approval by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole;
 - (b) To provide specifications of the types of additional expertise that the Group of Experts will need to carry out any assessment, as a basis for appointments, through the regional groups, of members of the pool of experts;
 - (c) To designate from among its members a lead member and, as appropriate, other members to take responsibility, under the overall responsibility of the Group of Experts, for each part, section or chapter of any assessment subject to the approval of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole or its bureau;
 - (d) To propose assignments for approval by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole or its bureau of members of the pool of experts:
 - (i) To work with the designated lead member of the Group of Experts in drafting working papers and/or draft chapters of any assessment;

^a It is understood that to carry out any assessment the approval of the General Assembly is required.

- (ii) To review and comment on material produced for any assignment;
- (e) To draft an implementation plan and timetable for every assessment, for approval by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, and, if necessary, to propose amendments to that plan and timetable for approval in the same way;
- (f) To provide general guidance to all those involved in carrying out any assessment based on the principles and documents approved by the General Assembly;^b
- (g) To carry out the implementation plan in accordance with the timetable and any such general guidance;
- (h) To review all material produced for any assessment, to take such steps as it considers necessary to assure the quality of data and information used in such material, and to take any further steps necessary to bring the assessment to a satisfactory conclusion, subject to the approval of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole if any such action would require expenditure from the trust fund for the Regular Process;
- (i) To propose arrangements for approval by the bureau for the peer review of the draft output of any assessment;
- (j) In the light of the comments from the peer review, to agree on a final text of any assessment for submission through its bureau to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, and to present that text to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole;
- (k) To promote networking among marine assessment processes and individual experts;
- (l) To perform any other tasks assigned to it by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.

Composition

5. The Group of Experts shall be composed as follows:

- (a) The Group of Experts shall be composed of a maximum of 25 experts and no more than 5 experts per regional group. Its composition shall reflect geographic and gender balance;
- (b) The composition shall ensure a mix of disciplinary expertise and involve participants from all regions in order to take into account different regional circumstances and experience. All of the main disciplines in the social, economic and environmental sciences should be considered for inclusion;
- (c) The experts may be drawn from any type of affiliation (e.g. Government, non-governmental organization, intergovernmental organization, private sector, academic and research institutions, holders of traditional knowledge);
- (d) The experts shall have experience and expertise in one or several of the categories described in the collective profile of the Group of Experts;
- (e) The experts shall have internationally recognized excellence in their field or fields of expertise;
- (f) The experts shall have demonstrated high-level participation in international processes relevant to the marine environment;

^b See resolutions 66/231, 65/37 A and 64/71.

(g) The experts shall have the ability to serve in an independent, personal capacity.

Appointments

6. Members of the Group of Experts shall be appointed in accordance with resolution 65/37 A as follows:

(a) Members shall be nominated by the States Members of the United Nations through the five regional groups (African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States and Western European and other States), with each regional group nominating up to five experts;

(b) Nominations shall take account of the criteria for the appointment of experts;

(c) Members shall be in a position to devote substantial amounts of time to the work of the Regular Process;

(d) Membership shall be renewed at the start of each cycle of the Regular Process. Existing members of the Group of Experts may be reappointed;

(e) An appointment to fill a vacancy occurring during a cycle may be made at any time, but the appointment shall come to an end at the end of the cycle during which it is made;

(f) The chair of a regional group shall inform the secretariat of the Regular Process that the regional group has made an appointment to the Group of Experts. The secretariat of the Regular Process shall issue a letter of confirmation of the appointment to the expert and inform the coordinators of the Group of Experts accordingly;

(g) If a member of the Group of Experts dies or resigns or for any other cause can no longer perform his or her duties, another member appointed from the same regional group shall serve for the remainder of the predecessor's term;

(h) Members shall participate in the Group of Experts in their personal capacity and not as a representative of a Government or of any authority external to the United Nations.

Proprietary rights

7. The United Nations shall be entitled to all property rights, including but not limited to patents, copyrights and trademarks, with regard to material which bears a direct relation to, or is made in consequence of, the services provided to the Organization.

Compensation

8. Members of the Group of Experts shall not receive any honorarium, fee or other remuneration from the United Nations for their participation in the Group of Experts. Members from developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing States, will, subject to the availability of resources, receive travel assistance to participate in the meetings to be convened by the United Nations in conjunction with the work of the Group of Experts.

Working methods

9. The working methods of the Group of Experts shall be as follows:

(a) The Group of Experts may operate even if there are vacancies in its composition;

(b) The Group of Experts shall designate two coordinators from among its members, one from a developed country and one from a developing country. The task of the coordinators shall be to take such actions as they jointly consider will facilitate the discharge by the Group of Experts of the tasks which it has been given. The Group of Experts may change the designation of the coordinators at any time;

(c) Communications between the Group of Experts, the secretariat of the Regular Process and States shall be made through a secure website, as appropriate;

(d) The Group of Experts shall communicate with the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole through the secretariat of the Regular Process and through meetings convened by the secretariat of the Regular Process, within existing resources;

(e) When needed and within existing resources, the Group of Experts may meet to discuss areas of work which cannot be dealt with through electronic meetings or other forms of electronic communication;

(f) The Group of Experts shall aim to work by consensus. Where consensus cannot be achieved, the Group of Experts shall ensure that all divergent opinions are appropriately reported in any draft, any proposal or any final text of any assessment.

Secretariat

10. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as part of its functions as secretariat of the Regular Process, shall serve as the secretariat of the Group of Experts.