

Lessons learned from the 1st cycle of the Regular Process

-Comments from the Government of the Republic of Korea-

The 1st integrated World Ocean Assessment (hereinafter referred to as "WOA") has provided the international community with an invaluable opportunity to enhance its understanding of the importance of the Ocean, the impacts of human activities on it, and the significance of its preservation as well.

While it is undeniably a laudable achievement, there are also lessons to be learned from the whole process of preparing the WOA. It first should be noted that there exists considerable difference in the depth of each chapter of the WOA. While some parts of the WOA demonstrate a substantial degree of specificity together with detailed description, some other parts of the WOA seem to be more or less confined to general descriptions, probably due to insufficient data for the relevant assessments. In the 2nd cycle, it would be desirable to ensure the uniformity of the depth and quality of description in each chapter with details to the extent practicable.

Another point of consideration is the limited participation of experts from socioeconomic fields. Given that the Regular Process was supposed to take a holistic approach, taking into account diverse aspects, including Socioeconomic Aspects, adequate participation of experts on socioeconomic aspects of the Ocean, with ensuing enhanced description on socioeconomic aspects, would have made the WOA more to the point. In this sense, it is necessary to include more experts and obtain more data on socioeconomic aspects in the 2nd cycle.

Yet another point which merits our attention is the limited source of data that was used. While there are numerous sources of data in diverse forms on national, regional, and global levels, the WOA seems to be based primarily on the data from international scientific journals and international programs. In this regard, it is advisable for the 2nd cycle to expand its data source to national reports and regional programs, and to ensure wider participation of UN Agencies and NGOs

along with many institutes at national and/or regional levels, which will result in the increase in useful data available.

Lastly, we would like to point to the insufficiency of communication between writing teams and Member States as an issue to be addressed. Member States were invited to communicate their comments on the first draft of the WOA and the writing teams officially responded to those comments upon review. However, with regard to the second draft, Member States were not given the opportunity to make any comment. While the writing teams may have not changed their views on specific matters contained in the first draft, even after reviewing the comments by the Member States concerned, when it comes to elements which have been newly introduced only in the second draft, this lack of opportunity is significantly problematic. In essence, with regard to those new elements, Member States were not given any opportunity at all to have their own views reviewed by the writing teams. As such, in the 2nd cycle, it is imperative to ensure better communication between Member States and writing teams if the 2nd WOA is to enjoy enhanced legitimacy and wider acceptance by Member States as well as by the international community, including the scientific community.

The Korean Government avails itself of this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to continue its constructive contribution to the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects. (End)