



**United Nations Open-Ended Informal Consultative
Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea
Eleventh Meeting, 21-25 June 2010**

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Item 4, Interagency Cooperation and Coordination

**Activities of UN-Oceans and its Member Agencies
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I will first provide a summary of the most recent work of UN-Oceans, and then briefly review capacity building activities of some of the UN-Oceans member agencies not featured in earlier sessions this week.

UN-Oceans conducted its **8th meeting** on May 5, 2010, in Paris. Following the retirement of the former UN-Oceans Coordinator, Patricio Bernal, in 2009, UN-Oceans first order of business was to elect a new Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator. I am honored to report that UNDP, represented by myself, was elected as Coordinator, and Jacqueline Alder, UNEP, was elected as Deputy Coordinator. In the interest of facilitating coordination and coherence, each agency provided updates on its recent ocean and coastal activities.

The UN-Oceans **Task Force on Biodiversity in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction** reported on its 2009-2010 progress towards its main outputs, 1. consensus on the global distribution, status and threats to biodiversity (including genetic resources) in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction; and 2. consensus on what tools (within the international and regional legal regime) are available for the conservation and sustainable use of this biodiversity. Progress was reported on preparing a compilation of information on existing tools within the mandate of each organization, the legal instruments for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in these areas, and ways to strengthen existing mechanisms of cooperation and coordination among intergovernmental organizations and bodies.

The UN-Oceans **Task Force on Marine Protected Areas** and other Area-based tools reported on its 2009-2010 activities. Further progress with identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) was made in the context of the Expert Workshop on Scientific and Technical Guidance on the use of Biogeographic Classification Systems and Identification of Marine Areas beyond national jurisdiction in need of protection held in October, 2009. The workshop reviewed progress made in identification of areas beyond national jurisdiction that meet the criteria in annex 1 to CBD decision IX/20 as well as national and regional experiences of applying similar criteria. The workshop developed scientific guidance on the identification of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, which meet the scientific criteria in annex 1 to decision IX/20.

IOC, UNEP and UN-DOALOS reviewed progress on the **Regular Process** for global reporting and assessment on the state of the marine environment, including the launch in August, 2009 of the first Assessment of Assessments Report here at UN in New York. UNGA Resolution (A/64/71) decided to

provide additional time for Member States to agree on the modalities for the implementation of the regular process, including the key features, institutional arrangements and financing. This review should be completed by a second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group (in September 2010) hopefully leading to the launch of the Regular Process in 2011. Among others, key issues requiring high level dialogue in 2010-2011 will be the interaction of the Regular Process with other global environmental assessment processes, and the modality for an inter-agency Secretariat for the Regular Process.

IMO as Secretary to **GESAMP** reported on the activities of GESAMP in the 2009-2010 period including its 38th session in February, 2010. One GESAMP Task Team will assist with the science background for the preparation, by 2013, of a binding international agreement to protect the environment from releases of *mercury and its compounds*. A second Task Team will work to fill scientific information gaps on *lead and cadmium in the marine environment*. GESAMP approved a proposal by IAEA for starting up a new working group on Establishment of trends in global pollution in coastal environments. GESAMP discussed progress in reviewing three new emerging issues in its work, including: micro-plastics as a transport vector for persistent toxic substances, endocrine disruption deriving from hypoxia, and bio-magnification in top predators, and agreed to continue its correspondence group on Environmental Quality Standards. It was noted that, since its 'Strategic Vision' was published in 2005, GESAMP has substantially revitalized itself by reconnecting with the international marine science community and by expanding its advisory activities.

The **UN Atlas of the Oceans**, launched online in June 2002 and hosted by FAO, contains useful information such as recent oceans news and events, maps, images and data. There are over 10,000 registered members, a number that continues to grow, albeit slowly as general activity to the site has stagnated. The Atlas is highly appreciated and valued (as assessed through third-person rankings and recommendations) and general use is steady. Future plans include continued development and strengthening of partnerships, and wider collaboration. Unfortunately no new funding has been received in the last two years, hence the somewhat reduced activity of the site, which was maintained entirely through in-kind contributions. All members agreed on the importance of sustaining support for the Atlas from the partners. A modest annual funding contribution of \$7,000 was suggested by FAO and four UN-Oceans members expressed readiness to make commitments at such a level, with others indicating they would explore options.

Due to financial and technical barriers, IOC informed that it could no longer host the **UN-Oceans website** so it was agreed that the data would be migrated to FAO for hosting on its servers with agencies sharing costs as required. It was also agreed that UN-Oceans, following the example of UN-Water, would in future locate its content under the web domain www.unoceans.org and FAO took immediate steps to secure ownership of this domain name.

Given the overall continuity and inextricable linkages between freshwater, the atmosphere and the oceans, members agreed that enhanced cooperation between **UN-Oceans and UN-Water** should be explored and encouraged. The participants agreed that an initial way forward would be to have the Chairpersons of each Group to attend the sessions of the other Group as well as exploring the possibility of organizing a future meeting jointly.

UN Oceans mapping exercise - UNDP prepared and shared with UN-Oceans a draft template for a proposed activity to map the principal activities of UN-Oceans as an aid to coordination, cooperation and "One-UN" coherence. The utility of the exercise was reaffirmed, the template was briefly discussed and UNDP agreed to share it with UN-Oceans members for further input, finalization and dissemination so that the mapping can be completed and results used by the members.

UN-Oceans Terms of Reference - Historically UN-Oceans has operated with an Organizing Secretariat (UN-DOALOS) and an Implementing Secretariat (IOC-UNESCO). Given general agreement that such an arrangement had proven difficult to implement in practice, in discussion UN-Oceans members agreed to merge both Secretariats into a rotating Secretariat that would be hosted by the organization of the UN-Oceans Coordinator during his or her stewardship of the Coordinator role. In relation to the setting of dates for UN-Oceans meetings, the participants agreed on the advantages of having the 9th and future UN-Ocean meetings at a date as close as possible to ICP meetings, as well as every two years to coordinate the meeting with that of the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands.

Update on Capacity Building Activities of UN-Oceans Member Agencies

In addition to these core activities of UN-Oceans itself, and recalling that last year I presented a comprehensive overview of ocean and coastal capacity building activities of the UN system, this year I would like to briefly highlight some of the more recently initiated capacity building activities of several UN-Oceans member agencies; in the spirit and intent of One-UN coherence, many of these activities are inter-agency in nature, building on the comparative advantages of UN-Oceans members.

The **CBD Secretariat** organized regional capacity building and review workshops on its Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA), covering marine protected areas, in 15 sub-regions covering 100 countries in the last quarter of 2009. Outcomes of the workshops included: (i) capacity building on how to integrate protected areas into wider land and seascapes and sectors and the potential of land and seascape approach for addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation issues; (ii) heightened awareness on various protected area governance types and exploration of innovative governance systems in different regions; (iii) 100 reporting frameworks indicating the status of implementation of PoWPA at regional and sub-regional levels; and (iv) awareness about values and benefits of protected areas.

The SCBD in pursuance of COP decision IX/18, launched a user-friendly, comprehensive central website to improve the national implementation of the programme of work on protected areas (PoWPA). The website provides important information, e-learning tools and forums for the community of experts working on protected area networks over the globe, and includes resources on marine protected areas. A unique feature of the website is its e-learning curriculum—interactive, step-by-step guidance with examples, case studies and tutorials to implement PoWPA themes, such as protected-area-network design, planning, management, finance, and policy.

The **FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department** leads capacity building in aquaculture, marine and inland fisheries in support of sustainable and responsible use of fisheries and aquaculture resources according to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Over the past year, the Department has developed a number of capacity-building activities, undertaken in all regions and at global, national and local level, covering among others the following themes:

- Fisheries and aquaculture management, including policy formulation - mainstreaming the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture into national and regional systems; resource assessment methods and their application; enhancing stakeholder participation and risk assessment; improving inland fisheries resource enhancement and conservation practices; and Better Management Practices (BMPs) for aquaculture
- Food quality and safety – development of methods and techniques for ensuring quality and safety of fishery products; inspection systems; stakeholder participation in fish landing site management; aquatic animal health management; and use of risk analysis

- Small-scale fisheries – promoting sustainable and participatory co-management mechanisms; safety at sea and gear construction and repair; and post-capture processing and marketing of fishery products
- Improving fisheries information – identification of fish species; fisheries and aquaculture data collection and processing; reporting information on fisheries and aquaculture status and trends; and participation in aquatic sciences and fisheries abstracts network
- Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing – implementation of Port State Measures; best practices in Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS); development and use of vessel registries
- Climate change - mitigation and adaptation of fisheries and aquaculture to climate change
- Fish trade and marketing - market access requirements and market intelligence
- Emergency response - damage and needs assessments; rehabilitation of fisheries livelihoods

The IAEA's Marine Environment Laboratories (MELs) are expanding their activities to support Member States in capacity building for the sustainable development of the oceans and the research capabilities to investigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change on the oceans.

Through its mandate, the MELs act as a focal point in areas such as certification of reference materials, marine radioactive and non-radioactive pollution monitoring and assessment, training and methodological development and harmonisation. To continue underpinning developments in Member States, these core areas have expanded during the past decade to include a wide range of radiotracer applications to marine studies, such as climate and environmental change, submarine groundwater discharge, harmful algal blooms (HABs), seafood safety and advanced analytical techniques. MEL provides support to regional networks of laboratories in marine radioecology, marine pollution, advanced analytical techniques, analytical quality support, applications of radiotracer techniques, monitoring and assessment, climate and environmental change, ocean acidification and databases.

Regional and inter-regional training courses that were developed by MEL in collaboration with member states support the UNEP Regional Seas Programme. They aim to support member states through an Inter-Agency effort to implement International Conventions. The areas covered include the application of ecological risk assessment methodologies to the evaluation of impacts of contaminants on marine organisms of relevance to fisheries, aquaculture and biodiversity, as well as QA/QC of trace metals, organochlorine pesticides, PCBs and organotin compounds. These courses are complemented by individual highly specialised and focused training in MEL and member states laboratories, targeting sampling, radiometric, radiochemical, radioecological and other analytical techniques applied to pollution and climate change studies.

One of the major impacts on the ocean of increased atmospheric levels of CO₂ is 'ocean acidification' which is likely to adversely affect many marine organisms that fix calcium carbonate in their structures. Thus ocean acidification may affect entire marine food webs, impacting natural biodiversity and aquaculture, and the IPCC has recently highlighted this critical issue during COP 15. The MEL has developed experimental systems using nuclear techniques to help unravel the effects of ocean acidification on commercially important organisms such as fish larvae and molluscs and key species in marine food webs in polar and temperate waters. These technologies are now being transferred to developing member states to support them in their national assessments of ocean acidification impacts

and adaptation strategies. An International workshop on the environmental and economic impacts of Ocean Acidification is planned for November of this year.

DESA serves as the Secretariat for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) to be held in Brazil in 2012 and its preparatory processes. During the first preparatory committee meeting for UNCSD 2012 held in New York in May 2010, several delegations noted persistent implementation gaps in relation to the maintenance of biodiversity, the combat against climate change and the reduction of pressure on ecosystems and fisheries. The need to strengthen international governance of shared oceans and marine resources, including the strengthening of marine protected areas as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and related capacity-building and technical cooperation for marine protection was highlighted. The necessity of working within the competent existing organizations and arrangements to promote sustainability of global fish stocks and mitigate the impacts of fishing activities on the global marine environment was furthermore underlined. Strong political impetus was needed to bridge implementation gaps, while small island developing states were mentioned by several delegations as deserving special attention and support. The proposal of a “green stimulus package” for developing countries, including small island developing states, which would comprise new and additional financing and technology transfer, was highlighted by some. In addition, several delegations called for the integration into the UNCSD of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

DESA is also currently undertaking a capacity-building project entitled “Capacity Development through Education for Sustainable Development and Knowledge Management for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)” with the support of the Government of Spain. Building local capacities to deal with oceans, seas and coastal areas is a strong component of this project with a view to addressing their economic, social, and environmental vulnerabilities. SIDSNet, a central knowledge management system and information clearing house will be utilized including for networking among universities and knowledge centres.

UNDP, with financing primarily from the Global Environment Facility through its International Waters focal area, has recently initiated several new projects aimed at strengthening national and regional capacities for sustainable management of several shared Large Marine Ecosystems. These include the Sulu-Celebes LME, the Humboldt Current LME, the Timor-Arafura Sea, and a project to strengthen the engagement of Vietnam, Philippines and Indonesia in the W/C Pacific Fisheries Convention and management framework. These LME projects will support joint fact finding to identify, characterize and prioritize transboundary marine ecosystem issues, their immediate and root causes; support joint development of regionally agreed action programmes of policy, legal and institutional reforms and investments, to address agreed priorities; and build national and regional capacity for implementation of agreed governance reforms.