

United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

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6 June 2014

Dear Ms. Goettsche-Wanli,

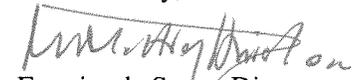
Reference is made to the letter of Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel dated 3 April 2014, inviting the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to provide input to the Secretary-General's Report on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, which will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly for consideration at its sixty-ninth session.

Please recall that the contribution of the CBD Secretariat to Part I of the report, which contained information on the topic of the 15th meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (the "Informal Consultative Process"), namely the role of seafood in global food security, was sent to your office on 31 January 2014.

Appended herewith is the contribution of the CBD Secretariat to Part II of the report regarding information on other relevant developments in the field of ocean affairs and the law of the sea. This contribution describes various activities being undertaken in the context of the CBD relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity.

I look forward to our continued collaboration.

Yours sincerely,


2 Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias
Executive Secretary

Attachment

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Annex. Information on other relevant developments within the Convention on Biological Diversity relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea

INTRODUCTION

1. Building upon the contribution to Part I of the Secretary-General's Report on Oceans and the Law of the Sea sent by the CBD Secretariat on 31 January 2014, this note consists of brief descriptions of the work carried out under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in the following areas related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea: (i) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; (ii) ecologically or biologically significant marine areas; (iii) threats to marine and coastal biodiversity; and (iv) tools and capacity development.

2. This contribution includes a detailed description of the work carried out under the CBD, within the framework of the elaborated Programme of Work on marine and coastal biological diversity (annex I to decision VII/5), related to the ocean affairs and the law of the sea, as well as an executive summary of the full contribution, as per the guidance provided.

3. *Executive Summary*

There has been significant work under the Convention on Biological Diversity with regards to marine and coastal biodiversity, in response to specific requests from the CBD Conference of the Parties, with a view to supporting Parties in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The work of the CBD Secretariat aims to support science-based decision-making in conservation and sustainable use, including through its work in facilitating the description of ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs). Through convening a series of nine regional workshops, held in collaboration with Parties and various global and regional partners, the CBD's EBSA process has compiled a substantial amount of scientific information in describing over 200 areas meeting the EBSA criteria around the world. The EBSA process has facilitated the sharing of scientific information, networking of experts across disciplines, and enhanced collaboration for marine conservation and sustainable use, with the goal of supporting the efforts of Parties and relevant organizations in working towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity.

The Secretariat has also been focusing efforts on improving the understanding of major threats to marine biodiversity and identifying practical means to mitigate the impacts of these threats. This work, which has focused on ocean acidification, underwater noise, coral bleaching, and marine debris, has come in the form of convening expert workshops, producing scientific synthesis reports, and compiling the views and experiences of Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations with a view to supporting actions to address these threats.

Additionally, the Secretariat has been conducting activities related to marine spatial planning (MSP) with the goal of supporting the development of consolidated practical guidance for Parties and other Governments in applying MSP, building upon existing guidance. This includes the organization of a forthcoming expert workshop on MSP, the compiling the views and experiences of Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations, and collaborating with UNEP in the development of an information-sharing mechanism for MSP.

The Secretariat has also undertaken capacity development efforts through the development of EBSA training materials and facilitating the undertaking of capacity building activities within the framework of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI). SOI facilitates information-sharing, communication, training, and technical assistance to enhance capacity towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity

Targets through global partnerships among a wide range of partners at the global, regional, national and local levels.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020 AND THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

4. The vision of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, which was adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 10th meeting in 2010 (COP 10), is that "by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people." The Strategic Plan aims to achieve this vision through twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets (<http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>), which provide guidance on the measures and enabling conditions needed to improve conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including marine and coastal biodiversity. During COP 10, Parties committed to review, and as appropriate update and revise, their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), in line with the Strategic Plan. In light of this decision, the CBD Secretariat, with the support of the Japan Biodiversity Fund, organized a series of sub-regional workshops to assist Parties to revise their NBSAPs and to include national targets. In addition, in 2013 a global workshop was organized to review the revision process (<http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/workshops/global/default.shtml>). As of June 2013, over 130 Parties eligible for assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the Financial Mechanism of the CBD, have initiated the process of accessing and using GEF Enabling Activity (EA) funds, and other funds, to facilitate this process of updating NBSAPs, in addition to developing their 5th National Reports and strengthening their Clearing House Mechanisms (CHMs).

Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity

5. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets together provide a coherent vision for a sustainable future for global biodiversity as a whole, but there are a number of Aichi Biodiversity Targets that are especially relevant to marine and coastal biodiversity, as follows:

(a) ***Aichi Biodiversity Target 6:*** By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits;

(b) ***Aichi Biodiversity Target 8:*** By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity;

(c) ***Aichi Biodiversity Target 9:*** By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment;

(d) ***Aichi Biodiversity Target 10:*** By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning; and

(e) ***Aichi Biodiversity Target 11:*** By 2020, at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

Other relevant Aichi Biodiversity Targets

6. In addition, the targets under Goal A address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society through public awareness (Target 1),

integration of biodiversity values into national planning and accounting (Target 2), reform of incentives (Target 3), and sustainable production and consumption (Target 4) are especially relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity.

ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS

(further information available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-18/official/sbstta-18-04-en.pdf>)

Regional workshops for describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs)

7. Pursuant to COP decisions X/29 and XI/17, the following regional workshops to facilitate the description of EBSAs have been convened by the Executive Secretary in collaboration with a wide range of governments and organizations:

- (a) Western South Pacific (Nadi, Fiji, 22 to 25 November 2011);¹
- (b) Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic (Recife, Brazil, 28 February to 2 March 2012);²
- (c) Southern Indian Ocean (Flic en Flac, Mauritius, 31 July to 3 August 2012);³
- (d) Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific (Galapagos, Ecuador, 28 to 31 August 2012);⁴
- (e) North Pacific (Moscow, Russian Federation, 25 February to 1 March 2013);⁵
- (f) South-Eastern Atlantic (Swakopmund, Namibia, 8 to 12 April 2013);⁶
- (g) Arctic (Helsinki, Finland, 3 to 7 March 2014);⁷
- (h) North-West Atlantic (Montreal, Canada, 24 to 28 March 2014);⁸ and
- (i) Mediterranean (Málaga, Spain, 7 to 11 April 2014).⁹

8. These regional workshops have facilitated the description of 207 areas meeting the EBSA criteria (annex I to decision XI/20). The results of the Western South Pacific regional workshop and the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic regional workshop were considered by the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting (COP 11) and, pursuant to decision XI/17, the summary reports on the description of areas that meet the criteria for EBSAs, prepared by the Subsidiary Body at its sixteenth meeting, were submitted to the United Nations General Assembly as well as its relevant working groups, by means of a letter from the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.¹⁰ The results of the subsequent regional workshops will be discussed at the forthcoming 18th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 18) prior to the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD.

9. Description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria is underway in the North-East Atlantic by OSPAR Commission and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission. Additional workshops are being planned for the North-East Indian Ocean, the North-West Indian Ocean and for East Asian Seas. Further workshops may be organized for other regions where Parties request them, in line with decision XI/17. Moreover, as

¹ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=RWEBSA-WSPAC-01>.

² Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=RWEBSA-WCAR-01>.

³ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-SIO-01>.

⁴ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-ETTP-01>.

⁵ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-NP-01>.

⁶ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-SEA-01>.

⁷ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSAWS-2014-01>.

⁸ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSAWS-2014-02>.

⁹ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSAWS-2014-03>.

¹⁰ UNGA document A/67/838 available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/838.

recognized in decision XI/17, additional workshops for the further description of areas already described may be held where new information becomes available, subject to the availability of financial resources.

EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism

10. Pursuant to decisions X/29 and XI/17, the Executive Secretary established a repository and information-sharing mechanism for scientific and technical information and experience related to the application of the scientific criteria for EBSAs. The repository and information-sharing mechanism were developed through the financial support from the Government of Germany, in collaboration with Parties and other Governments, and relevant organizations, in particular those involved in the organization of the regional workshops for the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria.

11. The EBSA repository contains:

(a) Reports on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, prepared by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice for the purpose set out in COP decisions X/29 and XI/17, that the Conference of the Parties has requested the Executive Secretary to include in the repository as source of information for Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations; and

(b) Scientific and technical information and experience relating to the application of the scientific criteria for EBSAs, or of other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria in areas within national jurisdiction, which Parties and other Governments have provided for inclusion in the repository, consistent with paragraph 18 of COP decision XI/17.

12. The EBSA information-sharing mechanism includes:

(a) Reports prepared by the Subsidiary Body consistent with paragraph 12 of COP decision XI/17;

(b) The results of the regional workshops convened pursuant to COP decisions X/29 (paragraph 36) and XI/17 (paragraph 12);

(c) Scientific and technical information and experience relating to the application of the criteria for EBSAs or other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria in areas within national jurisdiction that Parties and other Governments have provided for inclusion in information sharing mechanism, consistent with paragraph 18 of decision XI/17;

(d) Other relevant scientific and technical information related to the areas described to meet the EBSA criteria; and

(e) Links with similar initiatives, such as FAO's work on vulnerable marine ecosystems (decision X/29, paragraph 39).

13. In order to increase the accessibility to the information contained in the EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism as described above, the EBSA portal website (<http://www.cbd.int/ebsa/>) was developed as a gateway to the EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism. The EBSA portal website thus aims to facilitate the use of available scientific and technical information related to areas meeting the EBSA criteria by a wide range of stakeholders, and to convey the outcomes of the regional workshops on description of EBSAs in a clearly understandable way. It also intends to improve general understanding about the EBSA process, facilitate participation in future regional/subregional EBSA workshops, and promote the application of the EBSA criteria at the national level.

EBSA training materials

14. Pursuant to decision X/29, EBSA training manual and modules were developed to facilitate the capacity development with regard to the scientific description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria. These materials are contained in the document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/9 and available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-16/information/sbstta-16-inf-09-en.pdf>.

15. Pursuant to COP decision XI/17, the development of further training materials on the use of traditional knowledge in the application of the EBSA criteria is under way in consultation with Parties and indigenous and local communities, with the aim of providing:

(a) Guidance on enhancing the understanding by indigenous and local communities of the EBSA criteria and the application of the criteria, as well as awareness on how the EBSA description process can further enhance the existing efforts by these communities in their conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;

(b) Practical guidance for collecting and documenting traditional knowledge, including the types of research questions this knowledge can answer, issues related to building respectful partnerships with knowledge holders on the ground, prior informed consent, ownership of knowledge, and other important considerations;

(c) Explanations of methodologies used for documenting traditional knowledge, and for integrating contemporary science and traditional knowledge to build new “hybrid” knowledge systems; and

(d) Detailed and practical case studies from different regions of the world to provide insights on various contexts in integrating traditional knowledge in the application of the EBSA criteria.

ADDRESSING THREATS TO MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY

(further information available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-18/official/sbstta-18-05-en.pdf> and <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-18/official/sbstta-18-06-en.pdf>)

Addressing impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity

16. Pursuant to decision XI/18, the Executive Secretary convened, with financial support from the European Commission, an Expert Workshop on Underwater Noise and its Impacts on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity at the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization, London, from 25 to 27 February 2014. This workshop focused on improving and sharing knowledge on underwater noise and its impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity, and discussed practical guidance and toolkits to minimize and mitigate the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity, including marine mammals, in order to assist Parties and other Governments in applying management measures, as appropriate. The report of the workshop is available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/mar/mcbem-2014-01/official/mcbem-2014-01-02-en.pdf>.

17. A background document addressing the development of practical guidance and toolkits to minimize and mitigate the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity was prepared to support the workshop discussions. This report was revised on the basis of inputs received during the workshop and is available as SBSTTA 18 information document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/11 (available at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-18/information/sbstta-18-inf-11-en.pdf>).

Addressing impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity

18. Pursuant to decision XI/18, the Executive Secretary is convening an Expert Workshop to Prepare Practical Guidance on Preventing and Mitigating the Significant Adverse Impacts of Marine Debris on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats, to be hosted in the United States of America at Baltimore, from 2 to 4 December 2014 (information available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=MCBEM-2014-03>).

19. A background document addressing the development of practical guidance on preventing and mitigating the significant adverse impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats, including an update of the existing CBD synthesis document on the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity (CBD Technical Series 67—Impacts of Marine Debris on Biodiversity: Current Status and Potential Solutions; <http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-67-en.pdf>) is being prepared to support the workshop discussions.

Systematic review on the impacts of ocean acidification

Pursuant to decision XI/18, the Executive Secretary prepared a systematic review document on the impacts of ocean acidification on biodiversity and ecosystem functions, which provides a targeted synthesis of the biodiversity implications of ocean acidification for marine and coastal systems, including information on the less-reported paleo-oceanographic research, building upon the synthesis provided in CBD Technical Series No. 46: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-46-en.pdf> (English version); <http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-46-fr.pdf> (French version)

20. A draft of the systematic review document was circulated for peer review by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, in particular the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, relevant scientific groups, other relevant organizations, and indigenous and local communities.

21. The comments and suggestions received through peer review were integrated into the revised draft of the systematic review document, which is available as SBSTTA 18 information document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/6 (available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-18/information/sbstta-18-inf-06-en.pdf>).

Proposal to update the specific workplan on coral bleaching

22. Pursuant to decision XI/18, Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations, and indigenous and local communities were invited to submit information that may contribute to the development of proposals to update the specific workplan on coral bleaching, including relevant scientific and technical information, case studies, tools and guidance, and relevant management plans at subnational, national or regional levels as well as specific suggestions for inclusion in the development of proposals to update the specific workplan on coral bleaching through an addendum to the workplan. The Executive Secretary compiled and synthesized proposals to update the specific workplan on coral bleaching through an addendum to the workplan.

23. The Secretariat commissioned the preparation of a background document on achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems, which characterizes the vulnerability of shallow coral reefs in low latitudes to climate change, ocean acidification and other major stressors, highlights implications of this vulnerability for related ecosystems and reef-dependent communities, and discusses various approaches to managing multiple stressors and improving the resilience of coral reefs. This background document is available as SBSTTA 18 information document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/7 (available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-18/information/sbstta-18-inf-07-en.pdf>).

24. Taking into account the submissions from Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, the updated synthesis of the impacts of ocean acidification on marine biodiversity, the background document on coral reefs, and existing initiatives and programmes to address the threats to coral reefs, the Secretariat has developed a proposal on priority actions to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems, contained in annex II of SBSTTA 18 official document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/6 (available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-18/official/sbstta-18-06-en.pdf>), as a proposed addendum to the existing workplan on coral bleaching. These priority actions address the full range of anthropogenic pressures, in line with Aichi Biodiversity Target 10. This proposal will be discussed at the forthcoming 18th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 18) prior to the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD.

TOOLS AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

(further information available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-18/official/sbstta-18-07-en.pdf>)

Compilation and sharing of information on the experience and use of marine spatial planning practices

25. Pursuant to decision XI/18, the Executive Secretary to the Convention is convening an expert workshop from 9 to 11 September 2014 in Montreal, Canada, to provide consolidated practical guidance and a toolkit for marine spatial planning, building upon existing guidance,¹¹ in order to complement and further enhance the existing cross-sectoral efforts of Parties and other Governments on the application of the ecosystem approach to the implementation of integrated marine and coastal management, the identification of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the design and establishment of conservation and management measures, as appropriate.

26. Parties, other Governments, United Nations specialized agencies (including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the International Maritime Organization (IMO)), the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-STAP), regional organizations (including Large Marine Ecosystem programmes and regional seas organizations), other relevant organizations, and indigenous and local communities were invited to submit information on the experience and use of marine spatial planning practices, and existing guidance and toolkits for the implementation of marine spatial planning. The submissions received will be compiled and synthesized, and will serve as an input to the expert workshop.

27. Notification 2014-025 of 19 February 2014 was issued in conjunction with a notification that was issued by UNEP on 14 February 2014, which was linked to an online survey to gather information on experiences in marine spatial planning.¹² Additional details on this survey are provided in annex I of SBSTTA 18 official document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/7 (available at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-18/official/sbstta-18-07-en.pdf>).

Capacity-building initiatives and a global partnership to facilitate national efforts toward Aichi Biodiversity Targets in marine and coastal areas

28. In decision X/29, COP emphasized the need for training and capacity building of developing country Parties through workshops that contribute to sharing experiences and knowledge related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity (paragraph 37). Pursuant to this need, the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) was formed on the margins of the tenth meeting of the COP in 2010. SOI, of which implementation is coordinated by the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with various partners, provides a global platform to build partnerships and enhance capacity to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity. SOI facilitates, through partnerships, information sharing, targeted capacity-building to support implementation, enhancing interactive communication among stakeholders in different sectors, and monitoring progress on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity. In 2013, CBD Secretariat convened, within the framework of SOI and generously funded by Japan Biodiversity Fund, in collaboration with FAO and many other global and regional partners, a regional capacity-building workshop for the West African region (4-8 February, 2013, Dakar, Senegal) and a regional capacity-building workshop for the East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asian region (9-13 December, 2013, Guangzhou, China) focused on building capacity to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity. The CBD Secretariat plans to convene additional regional workshops in other regions, in collaboration with Parties and various global and regional partners.

¹¹ For example, the IOC/UNESCO guidelines on marine spatial planning.

¹² <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MSPinPractice>.