

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

Executive Summary

This note summarizes the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on marine and coastal biodiversity, which has been undertaken in response to requests made by the 11th and 12th meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CBD (decisions XI/17, XI/18, XII/21, XII/22 and XII/23). It is also related to UNGA Resolutions 69/245 and 69/109.

The CBD Secretariat has undertaken a series of regional workshops to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs). Through nine regional workshops convened by the CBD Secretariat between November 2011 and April 2014 around the world, the EBSA process has compiled a substantial amount of scientific information and described 204 areas meeting the EBSA criteria. The Executive Secretary is presently working with Parties, other Governments and relevant scientific bodies to further advance the application of the EBSA criteria, including compiling information on national exercises on the application of EBSA criteria or similar criteria, further developing the EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism, developing training materials on the use of traditional knowledge in applying the EBSA criteria, and developing practical options to further enhance scientific methodologies and approaches on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria.

The Convention's work on marine and coastal biodiversity also promotes the understanding of the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity and identifying means to mitigate impacts. This work, which currently focuses on ocean acidification, anthropogenic underwater noise, marine debris, and stressors on coral reefs and associated ecosystems, is carried forward through expert workshops, scientific syntheses, and developing practical guidelines with a view to informing actions to address the identified impacts.

Additionally, the Convention's work on marine and coastal biodiversity also addresses area-based management. Through an expert workshop, compilation of experiences and development of practical guidance, the CBD Secretariat is facilitating the application of integrated marine spatial planning as well as development and effective management of marine and coastal protected areas toward achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 11.

The Secretariat has also undertaken capacity development through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI), including a series of regional capacity-building workshops to address regional priority challenges related to achieving the Aichi Targets in marine and coastal area as well as a training-of-trainers workshop, national-level training, and the development of web-based information-sharing mechanism.

The CBD Secretariat has also contributed inputs to the process of developing the proposed Sustainable Development Goals.

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 6 February 2015, this note consists of brief descriptions of the work carried out under the CBD in the following areas related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea: (i) ecologically or biologically significant marine areas; (ii) addressing threats to marine and coastal biodiversity; (iii) tools and capacity development; and (iv) supporting the intergovernmental process related to Sustainable Development Goals.

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 ocean affairs and the law of the sea. As per the guidance provided, each section indicates the paragraphs of UNGA Resolutions 69/245 (“Oceans and the law of the sea”) and 69/109 (“Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments”) to which these activities are most relevant.

ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS

Relevant to UNGA Resolution 69/245 (paragraphs 200, 203, 221-227 and 239)

(further information available at <https://www.cbd.int/ebsa>)

Regional workshops to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs)¹

3. At its twelfth meeting, COP welcomed the outputs of the seven regional EBSA workshops held since its eleventh meeting. These workshops were for the following regions:

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

4. Combined with the outputs of the two regional EBSA workshops that were considered by the COP at its eleventh meeting, a total of 204 areas have been described as meeting the EBSA criteria and included in the CBD EBSA repository. Pursuant to a request by the COP, the summary reports on the outputs of the seven regional EBSA workshops considered by COP at its twelfth meeting were submitted to the United Nations General Assembly and its relevant Working Groups. The outputs of the regional EBSA workshops noted above, including the scientific information used in the descriptions of the areas described at the workshops, are available online through the EBSA website (<http://www.cbd.int/ebsa>).

5. In 2015, additional workshops were convened for the North-East Indian Ocean (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 22 to 27 March 2015) and the North-West Indian Ocean (Dubai, UAE, 19 to 25 April 2015), and are being planned for the Black Sea and Caspian Sea (tentatively planned for October 2015), and the Seas of East Asian (tentatively planned for December 2015), pursuant to decisions X/29, XI/17 and XII/22.

¹ Please refer to the Letter sent by CBD Executive Secretary to the UN Secretary General dated 12 February 2015 (Ref No. SCBD/SAM/DC/JL/ASO/84332), regarding the summary reports on the description of areas that meet the EBSA criteria.

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

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

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

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

⁶ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSAWS-2014-01>.

⁷ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSAWS-2014-02>.

⁸ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSAWS-2014-03>.

Moreover, as 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.

Addressing knowledge gaps and lack of scientific information regarding the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria

6. Pursuant to decision XII/22, the Executive Secretary is presently working with Parties and other Governments to develop practical options to further enhance scientific methodologies and approaches on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, ensuring that the best available scientific and technical information and traditional knowledge of various users of marine resources, including fishers, are used and that the products are scientifically sound and up-to-date, and will report on progress in this work to the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) at its twentieth meeting. This will build upon the existing scientific guidance and drawing upon the lessons learned from the series of regional workshops to facilitate the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria and views gathered from Parties and other Governments.

National exercises to describe areas meeting the EBSA criteria

7. In decision XII/22, the COP invited Parties and other Governments to undertake national exercises, as appropriate, to describe areas meeting the EBSA criteria, or other relevant compatible and complementary nationally or intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria in areas within national jurisdiction, taking into account States' own established processes within their respective jurisdictions, and to consider making this information, and other relevant information, available through the EBSA repository or information-sharing mechanism, in accordance with the process established in decisions X/29 and XI/17, and requested the Executive Secretary to report on progress to SBSTTA for its consideration at its twentieth meeting in 2016. Pursuant to this request, the Executive Secretary issued notification 2015-071, which requests information relating to national exercises to describe areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs. Information received in response to this notification will be compiled and synthesized by the Executive Secretary, included in the EBSA repository and/or information-sharing mechanism, and the progress report on this compilation will be made available for SBSTTA at its twentieth meeting.

EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism

8. 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, which are accessible through the EBSA website (<http://www.cbd.int/ebsa>), were developed through the financial support of 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.

9. The EBSA repository includes:

(a) Descriptions and maps of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, prepared by SBSTTA in line with the purpose and procedures set out in decisions X/29, XI/17 and XII/22, 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 EBSA criteria, or of other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria, in areas within national jurisdiction (for those Parties and other Governments that have specified that the information is to be included in the repository, consistent with paragraph 18 of decision XI/17 and paragraph 7 of decision XII/22).

10. The EBSA information-sharing mechanism includes:

- (a) Reports prepared by SBSTTA, 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;
- (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).

11. Pursuant to decision XII/22, the results of the seven regional EBSA workshops held since COP 11 were included in the EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism.

12. In order to ensure that the EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism can effectively achieve their purpose, as laid out in decisions X/29 and XI/17, the Executive Secretary will be further improving their functionality.

EBSA training materials

13. Pursuant to decision X/29, an EBSA training manual and modules were developed to facilitate 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>.

14. 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 peoples and local communities, with the aim of providing:

- (a) Guidance on enhancing the understanding by indigenous peoples 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 their existing efforts to conserve and sustainably use 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

Addressing impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity
Relevant to UNGA Resolution 69/245 (paragraphs 176 and 237)

15. 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>. At its 12th meeting, CBD COP welcomed the report of the expert workshop and encouraged Parties, other Governments and other relevant stakeholders to take appropriate measures to minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of noise. COP also requested the Secretariat to further facilitate collaboration among Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations on measures to minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity, and to compile and synthesize relevant scientific and technical information on underwater noise, as well as information on related measures taken by Parties, other Governments and competent organizations.

16. 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 was available as a 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>). Building on this background document, the Secretariat is currently preparing for publication a CBD Technical Series report focused on synthesizing the best available scientific and technical information regarding the impacts of underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats.

17. Pursuant to decision XII/23, the Executive Secretary issued notification 2015-066, which requests Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to submit information on measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity. This notification is available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2015/ntf-2015-066-marine-en.pdf>. The Executive Secretary will compile and synthesize information received in response to this notification and make this compilation available for SBSTTA at its twentieth meeting.

Synthesis of the impacts of ocean acidification on marine and coastal biodiversity
Relevant to UNGA Resolution 69/245 (paragraph 234) and UNGA Resolution 69/109 (paragraph 5)

18. In decision XI/18, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to collaborate with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization, relevant scientific groups, other relevant organizations, and indigenous and local communities on the preparation of a systematic review document on the impacts of ocean acidification on biodiversity and ecosystem functions, which will provide a targeted synthesis of the biodiversity implications of ocean acidification for marine and coastal systems, building upon the synthesis provided in CBD Technical Series No. 46. Pursuant to this request, the Secretariat published CBD Technical Series No. 75: An Updated Synthesis of the Impacts of Ocean Acidification on Marine Biodiversity, which was originally made available as an information document to the eighteenth meeting of SBSTTA; following additional revision, it was subsequently published as CBD Technical Series report (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-75-en.pdf>). The report was an input to the review under the UNFCCC of the adequacy of UNFCCC's long-term global goal and of overall progress toward achieving this goal (http://unfccc.int/science/workstreams/the_2013-2015_review/items/6998.php).

Addressing impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity

Relevant to UNGA Resolution 69/245 (paragraphs 176, 178, 183 and 184)

19. Pursuant to decision XI/18, the Executive Secretary convened 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, in Baltimore, United States of America, from 2 to 4 December 2014 (report of the workshop available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=MCBEM-2014-03>). The outcomes of the workshop will be submitted to SBSTTA at its twentieth meeting.

20. 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 earlier 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>) was prepared to support the workshop discussions. This background document is being further developed, with additional input from workshop participants and other experts, and will be published as a CBD Technical Series report.

Minimizing stressors on coral reefs and associated ecosystems as well as biodiversity in cold-water areas

Relevant to UNGA Resolution 69/245 (paragraphs 171, 192, 221-227 and 234-236)

21. At its twelfth meeting, COP adopted, through decision XII/23, the priority actions to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems. The priority actions aim to address the urgent need to consolidate and further strengthen current efforts at local, national, regional and global levels to manage coral reefs as socio-ecological systems undergoing change due to the interactive effects of multiple stressors, including both global stressors (rising sea temperatures and ocean acidification) and local stressors (overfishing, destructive fishing practices, coastal development, tourism and recreational use). The priority actions focus on maintaining sustainable livelihoods and food-security in reef-dependent coastal communities, including indigenous and local communities.

22. Pursuant to decision XII/23, the Executive Secretary is presently developing a global coral reef portal, in collaboration with existing global (e.g., the International Coral Reef Initiative) and regional initiatives (e.g., the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs and Fisheries and Food Security), to facilitate technical collaboration and voluntary information-sharing on all aspects of sustainable management of coral reefs and related ecosystems.

23. Pursuant to the same decision, the Executive Secretary will prepare, in collaboration with Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, a draft specific workplan on biodiversity and acidification

in cold-water areas, building upon the elements of a workplan on physical degradation and destruction of coral reefs, including cold-water corals, and in close linkage with relevant work under the Convention, such as the description of areas meeting the scientific criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, and with relevant work of competent organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for its work on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs). This draft specific workplan on biodiversity and acidification in cold-water areas will be submitted to the SBSTTA at its twentieth meeting.

TOOLS AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Guidance on approaches to area-based planning and management

Relevant to UNGA Resolution 69/245 (paragraphs 192, 200, 202 and 221-227)

24. Pursuant to decision XI/18, the Executive Secretary convened, with financial support from the European Commission, an Expert Workshop to Provide Consolidated Practical Guidance and a Toolkit for Marine Spatial Planning, from 9 to 11 September 2014. The workshop discussed gaps in existing guidance and toolkits on marine spatial planning and means to fill these gaps 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. The outcomes of this workshop will be submitted to the SBSTTA at its twentieth meeting.

25. Pursuant to decisions XI/18 and XII/23, the Executive Secretary is incorporating marine spatial planning as a key thematic element of capacity-building activities being convened by the CBD Secretariat through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (refer to the section below) in order to increase the capacity of Parties, especially developing country Parties, to use marine spatial planning as a tool to enhance existing efforts in integrated marine and coastal area management, identification of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, design and establishment of conservation and management measures, including marine protected area networks and other area-based management efforts, and other marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable-use practices.

26. Pursuant to decisions XI/18 and XII/23, and building on the outputs of the above-noted expert workshop, the Executive Secretary will work with relevant organizations to advance work on enhancing methods and tools, including monitoring measures, for marine spatial planning and to make marine spatial planning guidance and toolkits available to Parties, other Governments and competent organizations.

27. The Executive Secretary will also be working with Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to produce practical guidance on addressing the qualitative aspects of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11⁹ in marine and coastal areas.

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

Relevant to UNGA Resolution 69/245 (paragraphs 12, 15, 16, 18, 28, 176 and 219) and UNGA Resolution 69/109 (paragraphs 179 and 180)

⁹ Aichi Biodiversity Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 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.

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, the implementation of which 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. Coordinated by the CBD Secretariat, 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. Refer to Sustainable Ocean Initiative Action Plan 2015-2020 for further details (available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=SOIOM-2014-02>).

29. In 2013, the CBD Secretariat convened, within the framework of SOI and generously funded by the 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.

30. The Executive Secretary co-organized, together with the Ministry of Environment of the Government of Peru, the SOI Capacity-building Workshop for South America in Lima, Peru from 23 to 27 February 2015. The workshop focused on regional experiences in the use of: (i) integrated marine and coastal area management toward achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets 6 and 11 in a holistic manner, and (ii) scientific and technical tools in support of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, with a focus on the use of marine spatial planning. This workshop provided a key opportunity for information-sharing and peer-to-peer learning and exchange across different sectors dealing with conservation and sustainable use of marine resources in the region with the aim of addressing regional- and national-level capacity needs to achieve the Aichi Targets. More information is available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=MCBWS-2015-01>.

31. Within the framework of SOI, additional capacity-building workshops are being planned, as follows:

- a. SOI Training of Trainers workshop (Yeosu, Republic of Korea, September 2015)
- b. Regional capacity-building workshops for:
 - i. East Africa (Madagascar, November 2015)
 - ii. South Pacific (location TBD, June/July 2016)
- c. National capacity-building workshops for:
 - i. Namibia (Swakopmund, Namibia, October 2015)
 - ii. Country in the South Pacific (location and dates TBD)

32. In addition to capacity-building workshops, the Executive Secretary will be fostering a network of practitioners among individuals engaged in SOI activities, and will also be launching a SOI website.

SUPPORTING THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESS RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

33. Further to COP decision XII/4 on integrating biodiversity into the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and the sustainable development goals, the CBD Secretariat has collaborated with other UN bodies and MEA secretariats to contribute to the intergovernmental process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Various aspects of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are reflected in the proposal of the Open Working Group for SDGs. Further information on work within the CBD relevant to the development of SDGs is described in further detail in part 1 of the Secretariat's contribution to the Secretary-General's report on ocean affairs and the law of the sea.