

Annex. Information on activities related to marine debris, plastics and microplastics by the Convention on Biological Diversity

INTRODUCTION

1. This contribution includes a description of the work carried out under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), within the framework of the elaborated programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity (annex I to decision VII/5), related to marine debris in response to requests by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its 11th meeting (decision XI/18).

2. *Executive Summary*

One of the main areas of focus of the Convention's work on marine and coastal biodiversity is improving the understanding of major pressures on marine biodiversity and ecosystems, and identifying means to mitigate impacts from these pressures. This work is largely carried out through the convening expert workshops, and the development of scientific syntheses and practical guidance. Since the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (2010), pressures such as unsustainable fishing practices, marine debris, ocean acidification, ocean fertilization, and anthropogenic underwater noise, have been addressed, among others.

At its eleventh meeting, in decision XI/18, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention requested the Executive Secretary to invite Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to submit information on the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats; compile and synthesize submissions by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, along with additional scientific and technical information, as input to an expert workshop; and organize 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 that can be applied by Parties and other Governments in their implementation of the programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity.

Pursuant to COP decision XI/18, the Executive Secretary has carried out or is currently undertaking a number of activities addressing the issues related to marine debris and its impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity, including:

- (a) Organization of an expert workshop, held from 2 to 4 December 2014, and preparation of practical guidance on preventing and mitigating the significant adverse impacts of marine debris emanating from the workshop; and
- (b) Preparation of scientific and technical reports, including CBD Technical Series reports, on the impacts of marine debris and means to prevent and mitigate these impacts, based on best available scientific and technical information, including information submitted by Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations and indigenous and local communities.

These activities support the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and in particular, Targets 8 and 10:

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

EXPERT WORKSHOP TO PREPARE PRACTICAL GUIDANCE ON PREVENTING AND MITIGATING THE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS OF MARINE DEBRIS ON MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY AND HABITATS

3. Pursuant to paragraph 26 of decision XI/18 A, the Executive Secretary convened, with financial support from the European Commission, the 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. This workshop focused on improving and sharing knowledge on marine debris and its impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats, and discussed practical guidance and toolkits to minimize and mitigate the significant adverse impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats, in order to assist Parties and other Governments in applying management measures, as appropriate.

4. A background document addressing the development of practical guidance and toolkits to minimize and mitigate the significant adverse impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity as well as a synthesis of submissions received from Parties, relevant organizations, and indigenous and local communities in response to notification 2014-042 were prepared to support the workshop discussions.

5. The workshop discussed the followings, *inter alia*:

(a) Impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats

- ◆ Major types and sources of marine debris, including land-based and sea-based sources;
- ◆ Impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats;
- ◆ Monitoring, modelling and mapping to address the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats;
- ◆ Major knowledge gaps regarding sources and impacts of marine debris.

(b) Various issues and considerations related to prevention and mitigation of adverse impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats

- ◆ Experiences and approaches with regard to land-based sources, including measures related to waste prevention, including potential redesign of products, reduction, reuse and recycling as well as other waste management measures;
- ◆ Experiences and approaches with regard to sea-based sources, including measures related to fisheries and maritime transport;
- ◆ Main overarching approaches of regulatory and voluntary measures, infrastructure, education and awareness;
- ◆ Private sector engagement and producer responsibility;
- ◆ Improving awareness, collaboration and stewardship among international, regional, national and local stakeholders, and across sectors;
- ◆ Addressing capacity gaps and resource needs to implement measures for prevention and mitigation;
- ◆ Enhancing synergies and promoting collaboration on the prevention and mitigation of the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats between biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant international and regional agreements and organizations.

(c) Gaps in knowledge regarding the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity

- ◆ Sources, pathways, distribution and quantity of marine debris;
- ◆ Socio-economic impacts of marine debris;

- ◆ Population- and habitat-level effects;
- ◆ Impacts on marine biodiversity and habitats in the deep-sea and seabed; and
- ◆ Effects of trophic transfer of marine micro-debris in food webs.

7. The meeting report (UNEP/CBD/MCB/EM/2014/3/2) is available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=MCBEM-2014-03>

8. This report will be submitted, for its consideration, at the forthcoming twentieth meeting of the Subsidiary Body of Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention, to be held in Montreal, Canada, from 25 to 30 April, 2016.

CBD REPORTS ADDRESSING THE IMPACTS OF MARINE DEBRIS ON MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY

8. In 2012, a report on the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity was prepared by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the GEF (GEF-STAP), in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat, and submitted as information to the sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) as document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/15. The report was subsequently welcomed by SBSTTA 16 and the COP 11, which took note of its key messages. This report was later published as CBD Technical Series 67, “Impacts of Marine Debris on Biodiversity: Current Status and Potential Solutions” (available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-67-en.pdf>).

9. In support of the discussions of the above-noted expert workshop, a background document (UNEP/CBD/MCB/EM/2014/3/INF/2) addressing the development of practical guidance for preventing and mitigating the significant adverse impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats was prepared by the Secretariat. The document incorporated comments and information submitted by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations in response to notification 2014-042 (ref. no. SCBD/SAM/DC/JL/JA/JMQ/83342, dated 20 March 2014).

10. Following the incorporation of peer-review comments from Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, this document, *Marine Debris: Understanding, Preventing and Mitigating Significant Adverse Impacts on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity*, will be submitted as information to SBSTTA at its twentieth meeting, and be published as a report in the CBD Technical Series in due course.