



**Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State
of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects**

Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the General Assembly

The Twentieth Meeting

Provisional Agenda Item 3

Report of the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole

Note by the Bureau

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 320 of resolution 78/69, requested the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (the “Regular Process”) to continue to provide oversight of the delivery of the programme of work for the third cycle of the Regular Process.

2. Since the nineteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group held (via correspondence) from 6 September to 2 October 2023, the Bureau has conducted one meeting on 1 February 2024 to consider, among others, the progress in the implementation of the preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the third cycle of the Regular Process (2021-2025), as well as other items covered in section XII of General Assembly resolution 78/69 relating to the Regular Process.

Implementation of the programme of work for the third cycle

Activities related to the overall implementation of the third cycle

3. The Bureau was informed that, notwithstanding the recent nomination of Dr. Tymon Zielinski of Poland, there are still pending nominations for the Group of Experts. Currently, the Group of Experts has 22 members out of the 25 positions available. The Bureau members from the African group, with one pending nomination, and the Eastern European group, with two pending nominations, will continue to follow up on this matter trying to achieve the full constitution of the Group of Experts as soon as possible.

Activities related to the achievement of output I: Assessment(s) of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects

4. The Group of Experts, with the support of the secretariat, lead the convening of regional workshops in support of the third cycle of the Regular Process. Five regional workshops designed for developing detailed input and regional level data to support the drafting of the third World Ocean Assessment (WOA III) were held in Santos, Brazil, in May 2023, in Kingston in June 2023, in Mahe, Seychelles in July-August 2023, in Lisbon

in September 2023, and in New York, United States, in November 2023. These workshops focused on the thematic elements of the third World Ocean Assessment (WOA III) and consisted of two parts with a focus on: (i) component parts of the steps in developing sustainability pathways for the chapters in section 5A of the [annotated outline of WOA III](#); (ii) the cross-cutting themes of equity, gender and Indigenous Traditional owner and Local community Knowledge (ITLK) for contributing to the chapters in section 5B of the annotated outline (One health) and in components of the chapters and sub-chapters of section 5A of the annotated outline (Sustainable and inclusive ocean economies).

5. In accordance with the programme of work for the third cycle, and based on the finalized plan of assignment of roles, the Group of Experts developed detailed guidance (Guidance for Writing Teams) for the Coordinating Authors who will be invited to attend an in-person meeting of the Coordinating Authors to be held in Lisbon from 19 to 20 February 2024. Furthermore, an in-person meeting of the Group of Experts will be held in Lisbon from 21 to 22 February, with the aim of, inter alia, finalizing the timeline for the development and finalization of WOA III.

6. During the period January-September 2024, writing teams will be established with the goal of producing the Zero Draft of the third World Ocean Assessment (WOA III) in the 4th quarter of 2024. During the same period, the members of the Group of Experts will also start developing a preliminary draft of the lessons learned from the third cycle, which will be considered by the 21st meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to be held from 4 to 5 September 2024.

Activities related to the achievement of output II: Regular Process support for and interaction with other ocean-related intergovernmental processes

7. The Regular Process plans to continue its efforts on supporting ocean-related intergovernmental processes, including by convening a side event titled *Advancing the United Nations World Ocean Assessment: supporting future ocean sustainability and informing decision making and ocean policy*”, during the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference to be held in Barcelona, Spain from 10 to 12 April 2024. This in-person event will be held at the [conference](#) venue on 10 April.

Activities related to the achievement of output III: Capacity building

8. As part of the capacity-building programme of the third cycle of the Regular Process, in 2023 three regional workshops on capacity-building aimed at strengthening the science-policy interface were held in Santos, Brazil, in May 2023, in Kingston in June 2023, and in Mahe, Seychelles in July-August 2023. These workshops aimed at providing an introduction to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and related agreements, and an overview of the legal and institutional frameworks for the management of oceans at the global, regional, and national levels. The workshops also reinforced the knowledge and capacities of government officials from the regions, and other relevant stakeholders, on the science-policy interface and the integrated and

inclusive ocean governance frameworks upon which the ocean-based economic sectors can be developed in a sustainable manner.

9. The secretariat of the Regular Process, in cooperation with IOC-UNESCO, also convened an International Symposium of the United Nations Regular Process on strengthening the ocean science-policy interface, which was held in Paris, from 12 to 13 December 2023. The Symposium, which was attended by more than 200 experts, aimed at (i) increasing awareness of the importance of the science-policy interface for ocean governance, (ii) enhancing the understanding and knowledge of the science-policy interface through dialogue among multiple stakeholders from all levels, (iii) improving the identification of regional and global lessons learned and priorities in reinforcing the science-policy interface, and (iv) strengthening awareness on the importance of compatibility and synergies between assessments at the global and regional levels within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030).
