



**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 Thirteenth Meeting (by correspondence)

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 321 of resolution 74/19, 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 implement the decisions and guidance of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole during the intersessional period before the thirteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group.
2. Since the twelfth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group held from 29 to 30 July 2019, six meetings of the Bureau were held on 2 February 2020, 20 March 2020, 13 April 2020, 23 July 2020, 3 August 2020, and 2 September 2020, respectively. During these meetings, the Bureau considered, among others, items reflected in the provisional agenda of the thirteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group, as well as other items covered in Section XII of General Assembly resolution 74/19 relating to the Regular Process.
3. During the intersessional period, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process, in particular in the development of the second world ocean assessment (WOA II). Notwithstanding the situation of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its impacts, all planned deliverables relating to the development of WOA II, including the conduct of a peer review and a review by States, have been implemented according to the further revised timetable and implementation plan. This was made possible through, inter alia, the conduct of many activities in 2020 in an adapted manner, including through the extensive use of web-based working methods. The Group of Experts will provide more information on the progress in the finalization of WOA II under the provisional agenda item 4 (*Information from the Group of Experts on the progress in the finalization of the second world ocean assessment*).

Designation of National Focal Points

4. Pursuant to paragraph 312 of resolution 71/257, States were invited to designate, National Focal Points to facilitate the implementation of the programme of work for the

period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process, in particular with respect to the nomination process for additional experts to the Pool of Experts, the swift communication between the scientific community, the Group of Experts, the Pool of Experts, the Bureau and the secretariat of the Regular Process and awareness-raising. The General Assembly in its resolution 74/19 (paragraph 325) urged States that have not yet done so to designate their National Focal Points as soon as possible.

5. As of today, a total of 67 designations have been received. A list of National Focal Points is available on the website of the Regular Process at <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/content/national-focal-points-0>. Experience so far has shown that those States that have designated National Focal Points have been particularly active in nominating experts to the Pool of Experts, as well as to ensure swift communication between the scientific community, the Group of Experts, the Pool of Experts, the Bureau and the secretariat on other matters relevant to the Regular Process.

Group of Experts

6. With regard to the Group of Experts, it is recalled that the General Assembly, in paragraph 287 of its resolution 70/235, requested the Secretary-General to invite the Chairs of the Regional Groups to constitute a Group of Experts, ensuring adequate expertise and geographical distribution, comprising a maximum of 25 experts, with no more than five experts per regional group, for the duration of the second cycle of the Regular Process, taking into account the desirability of some degree of continuity, and in accordance with the terms of reference of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process. The General Assembly in paragraph 323 of its resolution 74/19 urged regional groups that have not yet done so to appoint experts to the Group of Experts in accordance with resolution 70/235, taking into account the need to ensure geographical distribution and adequate expertise in socioeconomic disciplines.

7. The Group of Experts currently stands at 19 experts with nominations still outstanding from the Group of Eastern European States and from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. This resulted in a significant challenge for the Group of Experts to manage its increasing workload and an uneven distribution of work among the members of the Group of Experts, which had become a major impediment to the effective functioning of the Group of Experts and also caused delays in the overall preparation of the assessment.

Pool of Experts

8. Additional experts have been appointed to the Pool of Experts during the intersessional period based on nomination by States or recommendation by intergovernmental organizations and in accordance with the mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts for the second cycle. As of August 2020, the Pool of Experts for the second cycle comprises 791 experts from diverse disciplines and geographical regions, including 87 experts from the African Group, 128 from the Asia-

Pacific Group, 19 from the Eastern European Group, 134 from the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and 423 from the Western European and Others Group. Of all experts, 553 are men and 238 women.

Approval of the lists of writing teams of the second world ocean assessment

9. During the intersessional period, the Bureau approved the full composition of the writing teams of WOA II. The list is available on the website of the Regular Process at: https://www.un.org/regularprocess/sites/www.un.org.regularprocess/files/list_of_writing_teams_asof_13_april_2020.pdf

Lessons learned from the second cycle of the Regular Process

10. The General Assembly, in paragraph 319 of resolution 74/19, requested the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to consider the lessons learned from the second cycle of the Regular Process, including with regard to the duration of the cycle and its outputs, in line with the modalities set forth in paragraph 282 of resolution 70/235 and on the basis of input received from Member States and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group and the Group of Experts, as well as from the secretariat, and also requested the Bureau to inform the Ad Hoc Working Group of the views received and to circulate that information in advance of the thirteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

11. On 19 February 2020, the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole agreed that the lessons learned exercise for the second cycle would consist only of the submission of written input by Member States, observers and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, which would be compiled by the secretariat and submitted for consideration by the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole and then by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.

12. In a letter dated 14 May 2020, the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole invited Member States, observers and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to provide written input on lessons learned from the second cycle of the Regular Process. A list of relevant documents and questions for consideration was developed by the secretariat for Member States, observers and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to take into account in preparing their input.

13. A compilation of all written input received from Member States and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on lessons learned from the second cycle, as well as the written input by the Group of Experts and by the secretariat on lessons learned from the second cycle are available on the website of the Regular Process at: <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/content/second-cycleregular-process/lessons-learned>.

Draft programme of work and resource requirements for the third cycle

14. In paragraph 318 of resolution 74/19, the General Assembly decided to launch the third cycle of the Regular Process, to cover five years, from 2021 to 2025, and requested the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process, with the assistance of the Group of Experts and the secretariat, to develop a draft programme of work for the third cycle, on the basis of the possible outcomes and building blocks of the third cycle prepared by the Bureau and endorsed by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at its twelfth meeting and taking into account lessons learned from the second cycle, and to report to Member States in advance of the thirteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.

15. Moreover, in paragraph 320 of the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare the resource requirements for the third cycle of the Regular Process on the basis of the draft programme of work for the third cycle, to be developed in the intersessional period by the Bureau, and to report to Member States in advance of the thirteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.

16. The draft programme of work and preliminary resource requirements for the third cycle, prepared in light of the above-mentioned requests, have been circulated to Member States and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole by the secretariat on 10 August 2020 in advance of the thirteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole. These documents are available on the website of the Regular Process at: <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/events/thirteenth-meeting>.
