



**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 Fourteenth 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 thirteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group held by correspondence from 9 September to 5 October 2020, the Bureau held a meeting on 7 October 2020 to consider, among others, items reflected in the provisional agenda of the fourteenth 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.

*Finalization of the second world ocean assessment (WOA II)*

3. During the intersessional period, notwithstanding the situation of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its impacts, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process, in particular towards the finalization of the second world ocean assessment (WOA II). During the meeting of the Bureau held on 7 October 2020, the Bureau considered the third draft of WOA II, with a view to approving its submission for consideration by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole during its fourteenth meeting.

4. The delegation of Argentina informed that it was not in a position to agree to the circulation of the third (final) draft of WOA II to the membership of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole unless a footnote would be inserted in the Chapter 7M (High-latitude ice) of the WOA II that reads “A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)”. As agreed at the aforementioned meeting of the Bureau, a bilateral meeting on this issue between the delegation of Argentina and the Co-Chairs was then held on 13 October 2020. At this meeting, the delegation of Argentina

reaffirmed that it was not in a position to be flexible on the insertion of the footnote. Accordingly, and taking into account the time constraints of the second cycle of the Regular Process to be completed by the end of 2020, there was no other option than to insert the requested footnote relating to the Falkland (Malvinas) islands, pursuant to the editorial directive ST/CS/SER.A/42, of 3 August 1999.

5. As agreed by the Bureau by silence procedure, on 19 October 2020, the text of the third (final) draft of WOA II, the responses agreed by the Group of Experts to comments from States on the second draft of WOA II, as well as all comments received from States on the second draft of WOA II (all in English) have been circulated to Member States and other participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole in advance of the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.

#### *Optimizing the attendance in the meetings of the Bureau*

6. During its meeting held on 7 October 2020, the Bureau considered the issue of optimizing the attendance by Bureau members in the meetings of the Bureau. It was agreed that this issue should be taken forward by the newly designated Co-Chairs and the Bureau of the third cycle of the Regular Process.

#### *Designation of National Focal Points*

7. 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.

8. 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*

9. 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.

10. 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 significant challenges 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. During the meeting of the Bureau held on 7 October 2020, it was agreed that the issue of ensuring the nomination of 25 members of the Group of Experts for the third cycle should be taken forward by the newly designated Co-Chairs and the Bureau of the third cycle of the Regular Process.

#### *Pool of Experts*

11. 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 November 2020, the Pool of Experts for the second cycle comprises 795 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 427 from the Western European and Others Group. Of all experts, 556 are men and 239 women.

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