



**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 Fifteenth 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 314 of resolution 75/239, 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 put into practice the decisions and guidance of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the intersessional period before the fifteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group, including by providing oversight of the delivery of the programme of work for the third cycle of the Regular Process.

2. Since the fourteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group held by correspondence from 6 November to 23 November 2020, the Bureau held a virtual meeting on 5 March 2021 to consider, among others, the constitution of the Group of Experts, as well as other items covered in section XII of General Assembly resolution 75/239 relating to the Regular Process. Following that meeting, the Bureau continued to work by correspondence to oversee the implementation of the programme of work for the third cycle.

Launch of the Second World Ocean Assessment

3. The major output of the second cycle of the Regular Process, the Second World Ocean Assessment (WOA II), was launched on 21 April 2021, through a virtual event featuring video remarks of the Secretary-General and other key figures and experts in ocean affairs. The key findings of WOA II and the Secretary-General’s messages on its launch have also been amplified through a social media campaign, which recorded a potential reach of more than 20 million people in the week following the launch.

4. On 1 March 2021 in anticipation of the launch event, a webinar on “Strengthening the Science-policy Interface for Ocean Sustainability” was held to raise awareness of the importance of the science-policy interface for ocean governance at all levels. The webinar also showcased the initial phase of the third cycle of the Regular Process and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, highlighting the synergies

between the two processes. A three-part web-series on “The Science-Policy Interface and Ocean Sustainability” was also developed to complement the WOA II launch event, featuring aquanaut Fabien Cousteau and other ocean experts discussing topics related to ocean sustainability.

5. The edited English version of WOA II,¹ the recordings of the virtual launch event² and the webinar,³ as well as the three-part web-series⁴ are available on the website of the Regular Process or through the footnoted hyperlinks. Moreover, the translation of WOA II into all official languages of the United Nations has been completed, and the printing of a limited number of hard copies of WOA II into each official language is underway.

Implementation of the programme of work for the third cycle

Activities related to the overall implementation of the third cycle

6. Considering that the third cycle of the Regular Process started in January 2021, and in view of the delays in the nomination of 25 experts (5 per regional group) to the Group of Experts, in April 2021 the Bureau granted the possibility to the Group of Experts to start its work in accordance with the Programme of Work for the third cycle of the Regular Process, with its partial composition at that time (14 out of 25 members) on a provisional basis.

7. The Bureau also agreed to continue its efforts aimed at ensuring the full nomination of candidates from their respective regional groups as soon as possible, bearing in mind the importance of ensuring adequate expertise and geographical distribution in the composition of the Group of Experts. As at 9 July 2021, as a result of new nominations from the African Group (3), the Eastern European Group (2) and the Latin American and Caribbean Group (1 – with 5 nominations now completed), the Group of Experts now stands at 20 experts. Efforts will continue to ensure the nomination of 5 additional members in order to achieve the full constitution of the Group of Experts.

8. During the reporting period, in accordance with the programme of work for the third cycle of the Regular Process, the Bureau developed, with inputs from the Group of Experts and the assistance of the secretariat, the Terms of Reference and Working Methods of the Group of Experts. With the assistance of the Secretariat, the Bureau also developed the Terms of Reference for National Focal Points and the Terms of Reference for Focal Points of Intergovernmental Entities. All three documents build on practice during the second cycle and take into account lessons learned from the second cycle. These documents are available on the website of the Regular Process.⁵

¹ <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/woa2>

² <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/woa2launch>

³ <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/SPIwebinar>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/SPIwebseries>

⁵ <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/events/fifteenth-meeting-correspondence>

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

9. In accordance with the programme of work for the third cycle, the Bureau, with the assistance of the secretariat, conducted a review of the mechanism to establish the Pool of Expert during the second cycle, with a view to strengthening such mechanism during the third cycle. Based on such review and taking into account the lessons learned from the second cycle, the Bureau developed, with the assistance of the secretariat, the Mechanism to establish the Pool of Experts for the third cycle. This document is also available on the website of the Regular Process.

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

10. The Bureau has been informed that its decision to grant the possibility for the Group of Experts to commence its work has enabled the start of the implementation of the programme of work for the third cycle. As the current priority, the Group of Experts has begun the scoping exercise for output II activities, as well as the development of the outlines of the brief documents which outline specific policy-relevant information from WOA II as they may relate to and support other ocean-related intergovernmental processes.

11. The Group of Experts has also begun to provide support for and interact with other ocean-related intergovernmental processes, including through attending and delivering a statement on behalf of the Regular Process at the recent 8th Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) held from 14 to 24 June 2021.

Optimizing the working methods of the Bureau

12. During its meeting held on 5 March 2021, the Bureau considered the question of its working methods, noting that concerns had been raised regarding inconsistent attendance at its meetings, leading to lack of quorum at some meetings. It was agreed that the Bureau should continue to consider ways to improve its working methods at its next meeting.
