

Draft recommendations to the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, for consideration for submission under the agenda item entitled “Oceans and the law of the sea”, on the progress in the implementation of the third cycle of the Regular Process and the launch of the fourth cycle

Recalling its previous decisions regarding the Regular Process, as established under the United Nations and accountable to the General Assembly;

Reiterates the need to strengthen the regular scientific assessment of the state of the marine environment in order to enhance the scientific basis for policymaking;

Reaffirms the principles guiding the Regular Process and its objective and scope, recalls the crucial importance of the Regular Process and its possible inputs for ongoing ocean-related intergovernmental processes, including for the 2030 Agenda, the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Informal Consultative Process, and the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, among other relevant processes, and notes the importance of continuing support and cooperation between the activities of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and those of the Regular Process, and the development of a regulatory regime to organize and control all activities of exploration for, and exploitation of, the resources of the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction by the International Seabed Authority;

Reaffirms the importance of ensuring that assessments, such as those included in the Global Sustainable Development Report and those prepared under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Regular Process, support one another and avoid unnecessary duplication, and also recalls the importance of compatibility and synergies between such assessments and assessments at the regional level;

Recognizes the importance of raising awareness of the second World Ocean Assessment and the Regular Process, and welcomes the enhancement of the social media campaign on the Assessment and the wider awareness-raising campaign of the Regular Process;

Reaffirms that capacity-building is one of the core objectives of the Regular Process and recalls that, during the third cycle (2021–2025), a coherent programme on capacity-building is being carried out with the aim to develop the capacities of States in strengthening the ocean science-policy interface at the national, regional and global levels;

Recalls that the Regular Process shall be overseen and guided by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, and that the Ad Hoc Working Group shall facilitate the delivery of the outputs of the third cycle of the Regular Process as outlined in the programme of work for the third cycle;

Recognizes with appreciation the role of the Co-Chairs and the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole in putting into practice the decisions and guidance of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the intersessional period, requests the Bureau to continue to provide oversight of the delivery of the programme of work for the third cycle of the Regular Process, and recognizes the support provided by the secretariat in that regard;

Welcomes the designation by States of national focal points, and invites States that have not yet done so to designate national focal points to facilitate the implementation of the programme of work for the third cycle of the Regular Process and beyond;

Also welcomes the designation of focal points for relevant intergovernmental organizations, and invites the secretariats of relevant United Nations specialized agencies, programmes, funds and bodies and the secretariats of related organizations and conventions that have not yet done so to designate focal points to facilitate the implementation of the programme of work for the third cycle of the Regular Process and beyond;

Invites the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Meteorological Organization and relevant United Nations system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes, as appropriate, to assist in the implementation of the third cycle of the Regular Process;

Invites relevant intergovernmental organizations to contribute, as appropriate, to the activities of the third cycle of the Regular Process;

Welcomes the constitution of the Group of Experts for the third cycle of the Regular Process, which currently consists of 23 members, and notes with appreciation the work being carried out by the members of the Group of Experts in the implementation of the programme of work for the third cycle;

Recalls that the Group of Experts for the third cycle of the Regular Process shall comprise a maximum of 25 experts, with no more than five experts per regional group, and encourages regional groups that have appointed fewer than five experts to continue to appoint experts to the Group of Experts, taking into account the need to ensure adequate expertise, gender balance and geographical distribution;

Endorses the documents developed by the Group of Experts to support the development of the third World Ocean Assessment adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at its eighteenth meeting;

Encourages the appointment of experts to the Pool of Experts in accordance with the mechanism, and requests the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to provide oversight of the establishment of the Pool of Experts;

Welcomes the meeting of the Coordinating Authors of the third World Ocean Assessment held in Lisbon in February 2024 to discuss, inter alia, the guidance for writing teams, the review process, and timelines for the development of the third World Ocean Assessment;

Encourages efforts to ensure completion of the zero draft of the third World Ocean Assessment for review by Member States as outlined in the programme of work for the third cycle of the Regular Process;

Urges States, international financial institutions, donor agencies, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations and natural and juridical persons to make financial contributions to the voluntary trust fund, as well as the special scholarship fund, and to make other contributions to the Regular Process;

Welcomes the holding of the twentieth and twenty-first meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole held on 15 March 2024 and from 4 to 5 September 2024, respectively, in accordance with paragraph 352 of resolution 77/248, and endorses the recommendations adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group at its twenty-first meeting on the progress in the implementation of the third cycle of the Regular Process and the launch of the fourth cycle;

Decides to launch the fourth cycle of the Regular Process, to cover five years, from 2026 to 2030, and requests the Bureau, with the assistance of the Group of Experts and the secretariat, to develop a draft programme of work for the fourth cycle, on the basis of the possible outcomes and building blocks of the fourth cycle prepared by the Bureau and endorsed by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at its twenty-first meeting and taking into account lessons learned from the third cycle, and to report to Member States in advance of the twenty-second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group;

Requests the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to consider the lessons learned from the third cycle of the Regular Process, including with regard to the duration of the cycle and its outputs 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 requests the Bureau to inform the Ad Hoc Working Group of the views received and to circulate that information in advance of the twenty-second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group;

Requests the Secretary-General to prepare the resource requirements for the fourth cycle of the Regular Process on the basis of the draft programme of work for the fourth cycle, to be developed in the intersessional period by the Bureau, and to report to Member States in advance of the twenty-second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole;

Recognizes the need for early preparation for the fourth cycle, and requests the Secretary-General to invite the Chairs of the regional groups to begin work aimed at the early constitution of a group of experts, ensuring adequate expertise, gender balance and geographical distribution, comprising a maximum of 25 experts, with no more than five experts per regional group, for the duration of the fourth cycle of the Regular Process, taking into account the desirability of some degree of continuity;

Requests the Secretary-General to convene, in 2025, up to two meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of no more than two days of total duration each;