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Excellency,

We present our compliments to all Permanent Missions of Member States to the United Nations and, in our capacities as the Co-Chairs 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 (Regular Process), have the honour to invite all Member States to participate in the review by States of the first draft of the second world ocean assessment (WOA II).

It is recalled that the General Assembly decided, in its resolutions 57/141 and 58/240, to establish a regular process under the United Nations for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects, both current and foreseeable, building on existing regional assessments, as recommended by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In resolution 71/257, the General Assembly recalled that the scope of the first cycle of the Regular Process focused on establishing a baseline, and decided that the scope of the second cycle would extend to evaluating trends and identifying gaps. The General Assembly also decided that the Ad Hoc Working Group shall facilitate the delivery of the outputs of the second cycle as outlined in the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 of the second cycle of the Regular Process,¹ which include the second world ocean assessment(s) to be prepared by the Group of Experts, building on the baselines established by the first global integrated marine assessment. In its resolution 72/73, the General Assembly further decided that the Group of Experts should proceed on the basis of a single comprehensive assessment.

The preparation of WOA II was led by the Group of Experts of the Regular Process. Its chapters and subchapters were drafted by interdisciplinary writing teams composed of experts from all regions drawn from the Pool of Experts of the Regular Process, which comprises more than 700 experts. The chapters have been peer-reviewed.

We recall that in the first cycle of the Regular Process, its scope was to establish a baseline for the assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects. The scope of the second cycle, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/257, extends to evaluating trends and identifying gaps.

The review by States of WOA II is one of the activities foreseen in the Programme of work for the second cycle. The regular evaluation by Member States of the assessment products, effective links with policymakers and other uses, and transparency and accountability

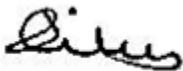
¹ See [A/71/362](#)

for the Regular Process and its products are among the principles guiding the Regular Process.² Accordingly, the review by States is an essential element to reinforce the science-policy interface embodied in the Regular Process. By reviewing and providing comments, States will have the opportunity to help ensure the accuracy, legitimacy and policy-relevance of WOA II, thus improving its overall quality.

We note in this regard that, on 27 March 2020, the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process approved the procedure for the conduct of the review by States and the instructions and template for States to provide their comments on the first draft of WOA II. As per the approved procedure, only comments submitted in accordance with the instructions and in the template as agreed by the Bureau will be accepted and transmitted to the writing teams for consideration in producing the second draft of WOA II. To ensure transparency in the review process, all comments submitted by States in accordance with the instructions and in the template as agreed by the Bureau will be shared with other States when the second draft of WOA II and the agreed responses of the Group of Experts to comments of States are circulated.

The consolidated first draft of WOA II, in PDF format, as well as the instructions and template for providing comments on WOA II are attached. Further details regarding the procedure for the conduct of the review by States as approved by the Bureau, and relevant background documents are available on the website of the Regular Process at: <http://un.org/regularprocess/WOA-II-review-by-states>.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.



Juliette Babb-Riley



Gert Auväärt

Permanent Missions of Member States
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² See [A/64/347](#), Annex, paragraph 21; reaffirmed in [A/RES/70/235](#)