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VI Meeting of UN-Oceans  
Paris, 2-3 June 2008  
UNESCO Headquarters  
Meeting room B.20

**REPORT OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF UN-OCEANS**  
**UNESCO Headquarters, Paris 2-3 June 2008**

**SUMMARY**

The 6th Meeting of UN-Oceans was held in Paris from 2 to 3 June 2008 at UNESCO Headquarters. Representatives from UNEP, CBD, UN/DESA (Deputy Coordinator), FAO, IMO, UNESCO/IOC (Coordinator), UN/OLA/DOALOS and UNDP attended the meeting. The participants discussed the progress made by the thematic task forces (Biodiversity in areas beyond National Jurisdiction and the Marine Protected Areas and Other Area-Based Tools), the development of the Assessment of Assessments (AoA) process and the UN Atlas of the Oceans, in addition to the new GESAMP, which is in renewal process. Inputs and expected outcomes into ICP-9 were also considered. Finally the participants commented on possible strategic planning for future directions of this coordinating mechanism and elected Mr Andrew Hudson, UNDP, as the new Deputy Coordinator, since Ms Anne Rogers is about to retire.

## **1. OPENING OF THE SESSION**

The meeting was opened on Monday, June 2 2008, at 10:00, by the Coordinator of UN-Oceans, Mr Patricio Bernal, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO and Executive Secretary of IOC, and Ms Anne Rogers, UN/DESA Senior Economist, and Deputy Coordinator of UN-Oceans. Both Coordinators welcomed the participants to UNESCO/IOC headquarters, and thanked them for their attendance to the meeting.

The Coordinators introduced the Agenda of the meeting (Annex I to this document. The List of Participants is available as Annex II).

## **2. REPORTS ON AGENCY PROGRAMMES RELEVANT TO UN-OCEANS**

The *Tour de table* focused on the constituency and modus operandi of UN-OCEANS in relation to similar UN coordination mechanisms such as UN-Water and UN-Energy. While UN-Water is becoming more operational (for example, through the three UN-Water centres in Bonn, Zaragoza and Perugia), the nature of UN-Oceans remains largely as an inter-agency coordination mechanism within the UN.

Discussion also focused on recent concerns expressed by some UN member States on UN-Oceans activities including the inappropriateness of accepting NGOs as new UN-Oceans members since it does not fit out with the core requirements of membership, open only to UN agencies and related institutions such as the World Bank or the International Seabed Authority, which is member following recommendation by the General Assembly. However, it was agreed that this fact should not prevent NGOs' participation, as an information provider or in relation to each member's own mandates, in relevant UN-Oceans Task Forces as agreed by UN-Oceans.

It was added that it is necessary to increase effective inter-agency coordination, enhance exchange of agency information on Oceans-related activities, and to jointly work on creating and disseminating common UN-Oceans positions in the most important upcoming UN fora, such as climate change.

### Decisions and Actions:

- Further elaborate a strategy for UN-Oceans
- Work on a common position in increasing the visibility of UN-Oceans and positioning oceans issues at international fora.

## **3. REPORTS BY THE UN-OCEANS TASK FORCES**

### **3.1 TASK FORCE ON BIODIVERSITY IN AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION**

Mr Václav Mikulka, Director of the Division for Oceans Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN/OLA/DOALOS) introduced this item. He reminded the session that the First Inter-Agency Meeting of UN-Oceans (January 25 – 26, 2005, UNESCO-IOC, Paris, France) established the UN-Oceans Task-Force on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction for the purpose of coordinating information input to the General Assembly, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and other international processes dealing with biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. He outlined that the expected outputs of this Task Force are to focus on: (i) consensus of the global distribution of biodiversity (including genetic resources) in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, as well as the status of this biodiversity and the threats that it is under; and (ii) consensus of what tools (within the international and regional legal regime) are available for the conservation and sustainable use of this biodiversity.

While reporting on the 2007-2008 activities of the Task Force, Mr Mikulka highlighted that DOALOS developed, in consultation with CBD, a web page ([http://www.un.org/Depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/marine\\_biodiversity.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/marine_biodiversity.htm)) addressing the issue of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, which included background information and links to relevant United Nations reports and other documents as well as a section on the UN-Oceans Task Force, with a list of web links to the websites of the members. He invited the participants to contribute to further updating this website by providing relevant information and additional links to relevant websites of their organizations.

Mr. Mikulka also informed the meeting that the Task Force had prepared a contribution to the UN-Oceans report on its activities to the eighth meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (Consultative Process) held in June 2007, which focused on the topic of marine genetic resources. The contribution provided information on activities undertaken by the members of the Task Force related to marine genetic resources. Furthermore, in preparing the Secretary-General's report (document A/62/66/Add.2) in order to assist the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (the Working Group, April 28 – 2 May 2008) in preparing its agenda, the inputs received by members of the Task Force were used by DOALOS as a basis for the information included in the report on relevant activities undertaken by their organizations.

Lastly, a number of documents for submission to the ninth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties were submitted by CBD for peer review by the members of the Task Force.

#### Decisions and Actions:

- Keep supporting the works of this Task Force and to assist the lead Secretariats (UN/OLA/DOALOS and CBD)
- Contribute to the further elaboration of the section dedicated to the Task Force in the web pages on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction developed by DOALOS and establishment of a link with the UN-Oceans website.
- Contribute to a compilation of information on existing tools within the mandate of each organization, the legal instruments for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in these areas, and the ways to strengthen existing mechanisms of cooperation and coordination among intergovernmental organizations and bodies. . This information could be posted on the above-mentioned website.
- Convene a meeting of the Task-force during the Consultative Process (ICP-9) that will take place from 23 - 27 June 2008.
- Designate focal points by each member of the Task Force for carrying out the proposed activities.

### **3.2 MARINE PROTECTED AREAS AND OTHER AREA-BASED TOOLS**

Ms Jihyun Lee, Environmental Affairs Officer for marine and coastal biodiversity at the CBD Secretariat, introduced this item. She reminded the session that the 5th Meeting of UN-Oceans (21 - 22 May 2007) established a Task Force on Marine Protected Areas and Other Area-based Management Tools. UNESCO (IOC, MAB, WHC), CBD, UNEP, and FAO were designated as co-lead organizations. The main purpose of the Task Force was to strengthen collaboration and coordination among UN organizations dealing with marine protected areas, especially to promote the accomplishment of the targets set by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). In this

regard, the Task Force focused on: (i) promoting and facilitating the application of MPAs as a management tool for marine and coastal conservation by UN Member States; (ii) enhancing coordination among UN organizations dealing with MPAs to improve coherence and effectiveness of the application of MPAs; (iii) developing a mechanism for exchanging information on MPAs among UN and non-UN organizations; and (iv) enhancing coordination and coherence in providing reporting inputs to relevant UN processes and mechanisms and/or the relevant processes of other international bodies. She submitted to the Meeting a compilation of reports on the activities undertaken by member organizations toward achieving these objectives.

She also reported that the ninth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 9), held from 19 to 30 May 2008 in Bonn, Germany, made a remarkable step forward toward achieving 2012 MPA target by adopting the scientific criteria, for identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas in need of protection, in open ocean waters and deep sea habitats, and the scientific guidance, for designing representative networks of marine protected areas.

She also reported on the COP 9 decisions regarding the issue of ocean fertilization. Recognizing the current absence of reliable data covering all relevant aspects of ocean fertilization, and bearing in mind the above-mentioned ongoing scientific and legal analysis, the COP 9 requested Parties and urged other Governments, in accordance with the precautionary approach, to ensure that ocean fertilization activities do not take place until there is an adequate scientific basis on which to justify such activities.

The Meeting noted that the task force members have been effectively interacting on the works of this task force, providing relevant scientific, technical and policy support in attaining its objectives. In particular, the results of COP-9 demonstrated a positive indicator of effective coordination and collaboration among member organizations.

#### Decisions and Actions:

*In relation to the above COP 9 decisions regarding MPAs, the Task Force Members were invited to:*

- Participate in the Scientific Expert Workshop, as described in para 19 of COP decision IX/20;
- Provide relevant information concerning the objectives of the above workshop and on the progress towards the 2012 target to the Executive Secretary for compilation and provision to the expert workshop

*In relation to the preparation for the in-depth review of CBD Programme of Work on marine and coastal biodiversity, which is scheduled for COP 10, the Task Force Members were invited to :*

- Provide relevant information concerning the progress made in the implementation of programme element on marine protected areas, including barriers and obstacles as well as priority areas for capacity development

*To facilitate sharing of information and increase the visibility and transparency of the Task Force activities, IOC-UNESCO was invited to:*

- Set up and maintain a website for the Task Force, in collaboration with other Task Force Members.

*Regarding the implementation of COP 9 decision on ocean fertilization, IMO was invited to:*

- Coordinate among relevant member organizations, and in particular assist the CBD Secretariat in preparing scientific synthesis report

*Regarding ICP-9, the deputy coordinator was invited to:*

- Provide a brief report to ICP-9 on the progress made by this Task Force

## 4. OTHER INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATIONS

### 4.1 ASSESMENT OF ASSESMENTS

Patricio Bernal, IOC Executive Secretary introduced this item. He pointed out that the “Assessment of Assessments” (AoA) is being undertaken as part of the *Start-up Phase of the Regular Process* (in accordance with paragraph 64 (a) of UNGA resolution 58/240, March 2004). It was requested by governments in order to serve as one of the main foundations for the development of a regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects. It builds on the work done by other international fora and, either directly or indirectly through those fora, by national authorities concerned with the marine environment. Mr Bernal reminded the session that the AoA organization has been agreed (UNGA resolution 60/30) to comprise an Ad Hoc Steering Group (AHSG) composed of Member States to oversee the execution, a Group of Experts (GoE) to carry out the assessment of assessments and produce in 2009 a peer reviewed report and a summary for decision makers, proposing options and a framework for establishing the Regular Process.

Mr Bernal added that the Secretariat has provided a functional on-line virtual office to facilitate the exchange of documents among the GoE members, and is developing a website ([www.unga-regular-process.org](http://www.unga-regular-process.org)) to inform Member States on the progress of this project. He underlined that an interactive online database ([www.unep-wcmc.org/GRAMED](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/GRAMED)) has been developed in cooperation with UNEP-WCMC, to allow users to search the assessments and activities related to the marine environment.

Concern was expressed with regards to poor coverage of the assessment in open ocean areas and the information gaps in some parts of the globe. Concern was also expressed regarding the few contributions received and the budget constraints to effectively undertake the mandate given by the General Assembly (GA).

The Participants stressed the importance of further deciding on the best way to report the results of AoA in 2009 to the GA such as languages and format (maybe as an information document annexed to the SG report). The participants agreed that it is essential to give the highest visibility to the results to respond to the trust given by the States.

#### Decisions and Actions:

- Partners will collect relevant information to post on the web. In particular, the International Maritime Organization will compile available information on dumping with funding received from Korea.
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Group of Experts will be held in November 2008 at IMO.
- The lead agencies in cooperation with UN/OLA/DOALOS will organize the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Steering Group of the Assessment of Assessments in New York, back-to-back with the ICP.
- UNEP on behalf of the lead agencies (UNEP and UNESCO/IOC) will report to the ninth meeting of ICP and will urge Member States to fulfill their commitment to fund the AoA process.
- Determination of the presentation of the AoA 2009 reporting to the GA.

#### **4.2 GESAMP (IMO/FAO/UNESCO-IOC/WMO/IAEA/UN/UNEP/UNIDO JOINT GROUP OF EXPERTS ON THE SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION)**

Mr René Coenen, Head, Office for the London Convention and Protocol of the International Maritime Organization introduced this item. He reminded the session that the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) was established in 1969 as a group of independent experts to give scientific advice upon request by the sponsors. At present, it is jointly sponsored by eight United Nations organizations with responsibilities relating to the marine environment. GESAMP consists of 25 to 30 experts, drawn from a wide range of relevant disciplines, including biodiversity-related disciplines; studies and assessments are usually carried out by dedicated working groups.

GESAMP has undergone extensive reorganization following an independent, in-depth review in 2001. A GESAMP Office, currently hosted by IMO, provides an Administrative Secretariat, which is presently responsible for general administration on behalf of all the sponsoring organizations. The Group's activities have experienced significant revitalization after receiving substantial financial support from Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). GESAMP Sessions have been reinstated on an annual basis, with UNESCO/IOC hosting the 34th Session (Paris, 8 – 11 May 2007). GESAMP is participating fully in the Assessment of Assessments (co-led by IOC and UNEP) as the initial step to establishing a Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment.

##### Decisions and actions

- It was agreed again that, although GESAMP would continue to be a collaborative arrangement between its Sponsoring Organizations, it should keep reporting to UN-Oceans.

#### **4.3 UN ATLAS OF THE OCEANS**

Mr Jorge Csirke, Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Division and Ms Tina Farmer, Communications and Publications officer of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FAO), introduced this item. They explained that the UN Atlas of the Oceans is an Internet portal providing information relevant to the sustainable development of the oceans. It is designed for policy-makers who need to become familiar with ocean issues and for scientists, students and resource managers who need access to databases and approaches to sustainability. He updated the participants on the new contents of the website and highlights of the atlas (Ocean and fisheries issues, uses of the oceans, and background on scientific research). Ms Turner pointed out that the support pages have been simplified and more visuals have been added to make them more user-friendly, including a step-by-step tutorial.

The members commended UN-Atlas for the work undertaken in the last 5 years, in which membership continues to grow, the general use of Atlas has been increased, and recognition has been growing and with a timely and relevant information.

However, it was commented that it is necessary to secure regular funding to this initiative in a long-term basis for a proper development.

##### Decisions and actions

- UN-Oceans members will keep delivering valuable content to the UN Atlas website and provide further mainstreaming within the UN and partners.
- FAO and UNEP will keep exploring other potential partnerships for increased support and sustainability from government and non-government partners. In this regard, the Coordinator will explore the possibility to arrange side-events at ICP-9.

- The Coordinator and FAO will invite current non-participating organizations to be partners in the Atlas.
- A re-print of the UN-Atlas brochure to be circulated at the upcoming ICP-9 Meeting.

#### **4.4 FOLLOW-UP TO THE GPA TASK FORCE**

Through teleconference, Ms Marea E. Hatzios, Senior Coastal and Marine Specialist of the Environment Department of the World Bank, made a presentation on Marine Ecosystem Valuation, given that there is a gap analysis of valuation tools and methods as applied to marine ecosystems, based on a literature search. She added that the next step would be to develop new tools to try to capture the value of "undervalued" ecosystem services, such as the system of national accounts used to determine a nation's wealth that will be able to track changes in natural capital related to coastal and marine ecosystems. She explained that impacts related to oceans are not considered enough in the climate change agenda and since adaptation related to marine and coastal resources is key for many developing countries, it is necessary for marine ecosystems to be properly valued.. The studies undertaken with UNEP on Marine Ecosystem valuation will be available in June for decision-makers' awareness of the marine natural capital of Member States.

#### **5. ACTIVITIES OF UN-OCEANS MEMBERS IN ONE UN PILOTS**

Stefano Belfiore, Programme Specialist of UNESCO/IOC, introduced the results of a survey conducted among six UN-Oceans members (FAO, IMO, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO/IOC, and WB) about coastal and marine projects carried out either at the national or regional level in the One UN Pilot countries (Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uruguay, and Viet Nam). The survey identified 26 projects currently being carried out at the national level, for a value of \$210 million, and 22 projects currently being carried out at the regional level, for a value of \$82 million. The survey demonstrated the sectoral nature of coastal and marine projects and the potential for synergies among UN agencies, especially in the area of the management of marine living resources on the regional scale. The meeting agreed to continue the study with a more in-depth analysis of two case studies among those already identified to distil lessons learned, as well as to consider ways to improve coordination among ocean-related UN organizations prior or during common country programming processes.

The participants stressed the importance of maintaining and developing synergies on this matter for successful results and not taking any further action until a consolidation of this initiative has been achieved.

#### **6. INPUTS INTO ICP-9**

The Deputy UN-Oceans Coordinator, Ms Anne Rogers and Václav Mikulka, Director of UN/OLA/DOALOS introduced this item. They highlighted the importance that when informing the States at the upcoming IOC-9 on the activities undertaken under UN-Oceans, it is essential to underscore to the States that the mandate of UN-Oceans is to coordinate the work on ocean and coastal issues within the UN system and thus the membership of NGOs or other non-UN actors in UN-Oceans at present is not being applied or considered..

##### Decisions and actions

- Anne Rogers, from UN/DESA, in her capacity as Deputy Coordinator, will report on UN-Oceans at the ICP since the Coordinator is unable to attend.
- The document updating information on UN-Oceans will be distributed at the ICP and the report of the meeting (a summary of this document) will be posted on the website

- The low visibility of ocean and coastal issues with regard to climate change will be noted at ICP-9

## **7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR UN-OCEANS**

The UN Oceans Deputy Coordinator, Ms Anne Rogers, introduced this item. She suggested addressing issues about membership, medium term goals, scope of activities and modus operandi.

Regarding the membership, several participants further stressed the need to expand UN-Oceans to other members of the UN family: UNFCCC (in particular), the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO).

In reference to the Medium Term Goals, the Group commented on the need to develop a strategy with clear drivers for future work of UN-Oceans, setting out the priorities, in which climate change should be included. Thus, Members of UN Oceans agree to consider the creation of a task force on climate change in the near future.

The participants also stressed the need to increase the visibility of oceans issues in relevant climate change events and raise this gap at the ICP-9.

With regard to the scope of activities the participants agreed that the current modus operandi is the right path to follow for the current time.

Finally, regarding the modus operandi, it was highlighted that the regularity of the process is important. In this view, a UN-Oceans meeting should be arranged at least once a year.

### Decisions and actions

- The Coordinator will send an invitation letter to other relevant UN organizations to join UN-Oceans.
- The members will work in updating the document on the activities of UN-Oceans.
- A section will be established on the website on Climate Change, collecting what UN-Oceans members are doing in this field.
- A meeting of UN-Oceans will be arranged before ICP-10, in 2009.
- A calendar of common events related to oceans in the website will be established.

## **8. ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY CO-ORDINATOR**

Since the current Deputy Co-ordinator, Ms Anne Rogers is about to retire in July 2008, Mr Andrew Hudson, Principal Technical Advisor at the International Waters/POPs of the Global Environment Facility of the UN Development Programme, was elected new Deputy Co-ordinator and will take over the functions when Ms Anne Rogers leaves the UN.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr Vaclav Mikulka, Director of UN/OLA/DOALOS informed the participants of the dates for the negotiation of the UN General Assembly resolutions for the Law of the Sea. He also anticipated the publication of a Manual on ecosystem approach management. Ms Jihyun Lee referred to the work undertaken by CBD in this field.

The Group commented on the importance of paying attention to the inter-agency co-ordination to avoid duplication of efforts in all matters.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

Ms Anne Rogers, Deputy Coordinator of UN-Oceans, thanked the participants for attending the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of UN-Oceans and expressed her satisfaction with the success of this meeting, which was closed at 12.00 pm, on Tuesday, 3 June 2008.

## **ANNEX I**

### **AGENDA**

- 1. OPENING**
- 2. REPORTS ON AGENCY PROGRAMMES RELEVANT TO UN-OCEANS**
- 3. REPORTS BY THE UN-OCEANS TASK FORCES**
  - 3.1 Biodiversity in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (UN/OLA/DOALOS)
  - 3.2 Marine Protected Areas and Other Area-Based Tools (CBD)
- 4. OTHER INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATIONS**
  - 4.1 Assessment of Assessments (IOC)
  - 4.2 GESAMP (IMO)
  - 4.3 UN Atlas of the Oceans (FAO)
- 5. ACTIVITIES OF UN-OCEANS MEMBERS IN ONE UN PILOTS (UNDP/IOC)**
- 6. INPUTS INTO ICP-9**
- 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR UN-OCEANS**
- 8. ELECTION OF DEPUTY COORDINATOR**
- 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- 10. CLOSING**

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