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**UNEP/EC Workshop on Area-based
Management and Regional Cooperation
for the Implementation of Ocean-related
Sustainable Development Goals**

Brussels, 9-10 February 2017

Conclusions of the Workshop

International workshop on area-based management, regional coordination and cross-sectoral cooperation for delivery of ocean-related SDGs

9-10 February 2017, Brussels

Discussion summary

- The workshop was attended by experts from UN Environment, European Commission, European Environment Agency, European External Action Service, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Union for Conservation of Nature, World Maritime University, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Institute of Advanced Sustainability Studies, Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, representatives of Regional Seas Programmes (Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), Teheran Convention, Black Sea Commission, Comision Permanente del Pacifico Sur (CPPS), Regional Organization of Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), OSPAR Commission, Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)) and a regional fisheries management organisation (General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)). Representatives of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea also joined the meeting by skype to make a presentation. The discussion focused on the delivery of SDG 14 and other ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through application of area-based management tools and through regional cross-sectoral cooperation to implement coherently marine, maritime, fisheries and other relevant policies.

- The 2030 Agenda brings new impetus towards ocean sustainability, placing resource use and conservation into a wider sustainable development framework. In order to address the linkages between sectors and instill substance and concrete actions toward coordinated management strategies and policies, political will needs to be mobilised.

- A holistic approach to oceans should include effective governance, institutional interactions and coherent policies and SDG 14 and other ocean related SDGs are important drivers to that end.

- Frameworks for cooperation among stakeholders across various levels could be further developed, to enable development and implementation of systemic approaches and governance arrangements, thus ensuring that SDG 14 delivery follows an integrated, ecosystem based approach to allow for addressing pressures on a way to a sustainable "blue economy".

- Partnerships, in their various dimensions, are recognised as the basis for delivery of SDG 14 and other ocean-related targets. This includes vertical (across e.g. regional-global scales), horizontal (across sectors) and multi-stakeholder partnerships (including civil society, private sector and others).

- Partnerships at the sea-basin level provide an opportunity for regionally-coordinated efforts in harmonised delivery of ocean-related parts of the 2030 Agenda by stakeholders within the sea basins. Strengthened inter- and intra-organisational coordination and information-sharing to support cross-sectoral cooperation is important. Several good examples of cross-sectoral cooperation exist at the regional level, particularly the cooperation between Regional Seas programmes and Regional Fisheries Bodies. Such partnerships can be established through, *inter alia*, memoranda of understanding and similar formal agreements, such as in the cases of GFCM

and UNEP-MAP or OSPAR and the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission. An important first step is to understand the different mandates of these organisations through dialogues.

- Many strategy development processes to support sustainable ocean and coastal development are noted. Continued exchange of information and mutual learning and feedback are encouraged to ensure coherence. In this context, it would be important to ensure coherence among the strategies and possibly even combining them under an umbrella strategy. In that effort, we should, to the extent possible, use the existing governance structures.

- The meeting noted existing sustainable development strategies adopted at the regional level to accelerate progress towards the implementation of SDG 14, for example, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and the mid-term strategy (2017-2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries adopted by the GFCM.

- Different levels of development and maturity have been attained by individual regional fishery bodies and Regional Seas programmes. Information on the results of performance reviews and effectiveness evaluations should be shared, also with a view to monitoring the implementation at the regional level, monitoring the impacts of the respective frameworks and evaluating effectiveness of regional ocean governance.

- The meeting acknowledged a number of existing regional governance frameworks and processes, in particular, regional ministerial fora for the environment, which address marine and coastal issues. This includes, for example, the decision of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) of March 2015 underlining the role of the regional seas conventions and to develop an "African Ocean Governance Strategy". Other examples are the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean with a decision on ocean in March 2016. The Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities in Asia and the Pacific is also expected to address this topic in its next session.

- The meeting identified some developments at the sub-regional level, on which broader governance mechanisms and strategies could build:

    - In Africa, the Regional Seas Conventions are contributing to the AMCEN process. In particular, the Abidjan Convention is developing a regional ocean governance blueprint and the Nairobi Convention is gathering lessons learned on tools and methods for integrated coastal management, taking into consideration climate change and blue economy.
    - In the Mediterranean, the institutional framework around the MSSD is a key example, which could serve as a building block for the African Ocean governance strategy and inspire other regional governance mechanisms, including interconnected seas such as the Black Sea, Caspian Sea and the Red Sea.
    - In Latin America and the Caribbean, increased integration between sub-regional initiatives is being seen with an example of cooperation between the Cartagena Convention and the West and Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission, the CPPS initiating an integrated ocean policy process, and its Galapagos Commitments working with other mechanisms of the South Pacific.
    - In Asia, coordination between East Asian regional programmes is being observed and a new strategy for the Coordinating Body for the Seas of East Asia is under development. A new marine biodiversity strategy is being developed for South Asia

Seas under the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, and ecological objectives are being set for the Northwest Pacific Action Plan.

- In the Pacific, the Ocean Commissioner coordinates ocean-related regional policies under the Pacific Island Forum, and has launched a "Pacific Oceanscape Initiative" as well as a "Pacific Ocean Alliance."

- Continued exchange of information, mutual learning and feedback among regional processes, involving key stakeholders and partners such as the EU, are needed in order to ensure coherence and synergies between the different sustainable development strategies and initiatives.

- Area-based management tools (ABMTs[1]) can help operationalise the Ecosystem Approach and thereby contribute to achievement of many ocean-related SDGs and targets, including food security, poverty eradication and coastal resilience, at regional, national and local levels. There is an opportunity to consider ABMTs from a systemic perspective; to identify the connectors between different tools, to map specific pathways on how ABMTs can contribute to SDGs, and to develop frameworks combining ABMTs to achieve multiple management objectives and a range of ocean-related SDGs. Further, capacity-building at regional and national levels to support implementation of ocean-related SDGs is considered necessary, particularly on ABMTs concepts, on application and possible combination of ABMTs and on ensuring coherence between terrestrial ABMTs and marine ABMTs.

- There is a scope for further advancing Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning across borders. It is recommended to facilitate sharing of data and experience to inform practical application of ABMTs. This should include strengthening of socio-economic analysis, models for socio-economic values and issues (complementing ecosystem models) as well as mapping and assessment of cumulative impacts of human activities.

- There is a need to address upstream issues, e.g. land-based sources of pollution and wastewater, impacting coastal and ocean areas. Land-based pollution management and integrative ABMTs (e.g. integrated watershed management, ridge-to-reef approaches, and integrated coastal zone management) could address land-sea interactions, thus linking SDGs 6, 14 and 15. Similarly, the 'blue economy' is dependent on and affected by land-based activities impacting oceans.

- Important lessons can be learnt from practical application of ABMTs, for example, from the Nairobi Convention case study presented. This example from South Africa illustrated challenges