

Event Report:

Achieving SDG 14 through the Regional Seas programmes

From regional to global: Shared seas and shared actions for the sustainability of our oceans

1. The side event entitled “Achieving SDG 14 through the Regional Seas programmes” was held on 16 February 2017 in Conference Room 8 of the United Nations Secretariat in New York. The event opened at 1:20pm by Ms. Lisa Emelia Svensson on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme. She thanked the Government of Sweden for generous support to this event.
2. Mr. Stefan Berggren, Director for Division for Natural Environment, Ministry of the Environment and Energy, Sweden delivered his opening remark. He highlighted the importance of political commitments for successful regional cooperation. Recalling that the environmental dimension underpins social and economic development, he stressed the importance of science-based assessment in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. H.E. Ambassador Ms. Janine Felson, Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Mission of Belize to the United Nations, delivered her remarks. She stated that the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals would need to build on existing efforts. The regional level would also be important to strengthen cooperation and partnership. She pointed out the ongoing collaboration between Regional Seas programmes and Regional Fisheries Bodies was a good example of successful regional partnerships.
4. Ms. Svensson provided a brief introduction and explained that the United Nations Environment Programme coordinates the Regional Seas Programme. Currently eighteen Regional Seas programmes participate in the Programme of which seven are administered by the United Nations Environment Programme.
5. Ms. Svensson invited Regional Seas programmes to deliver their three-minutes pitches.
6. Ms. Lonra Inniss, Cartagena Convention, showcased the successful implementation of regional Marine Protected Area network in the Wider Caribbean region. She explained that the capacity building has been provided to train trainers of Marine Protected Area managers. The programme also has a small grant scheme to support the management of Marine Protected Areas.
7. Ms. Laura Piriz, HELCOM, described the successful cooperation with the shipping industry. Cooperation among the industry, maritime and environmental authorities in the region, and non-governmental organisations was important for the successful cross-sectoral work.
8. Mr. Gaetano Leone, Barcelona Convention, described the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy. He stressed the importance of regional dimension along with the global level discussion to

achieve sustainable development.

9. Mr. Mahir Aliyev, Tehran Convention, described the development of the Tehran Convention and its protocols. He concluded that the Tehran Convention, as well as other Regional Seas Conventions, offers an effective platform for addressing the regional dimension of the Agenda 2030 implementation in the Caspian Sea as it stands on the common denominators established by the states that share the ecosystem and allows engaging with stakeholders to set the norms of performance and achievements common for all.
10. Mr. Tommy Moore, SPREP, described the application of ecosystem-based adaptation in the Pacific region. He emphasized that not only the short term impacts but also long-term impact need to be considered. He described a study conducted in Lami Town, Fiji which found that restoration of mangroves had considerable cost-savings and benefits as compared to hard options, especially when considered over longer time scales. He concluded by reaffirming that SPREP is committed to the promotion of the effective use of ecosystem-based adaptation.
11. Mr. Darius Campbell, OSPAR, described cross-sectoral cooperation in the High Seas. He explained that the cooperation with the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission now works at both institutional, secretariat and national level. He highlighted that difference in mandates were not barriers for cooperation. By respecting respective mandates, cross-sectoral and cross-regional cooperation would be possible.
12. Ms. Svensson thanked the Regional Seas presenters and invited the Panel members to present their view on the three key questions: (i) What are central elements for successful regional cooperation?; (ii) How existing Regional Seas can support the implementation and review of the ocean-related SDGs?; and (iii) How can regional partnerships add value and contribute to the implementation of SDG 14?
13. Ms. Marijana Mance, European Commission, stressed that the Regional Seas programmes played a key role in the implementation of SDG 14. Recalling resolution 2/10 of the United Nations Environment Assembly, which invited international and regional cooperation for the Sustainable Development Goals, she indicated that cooperation between different Regional Seas programmes were also crucial while cross-sectoral cooperation with Regional Fisheries Bodies was also encouraged. She pointed out that Marine Strategy Framework Directive of the European Commission demonstrated regional partnership on shared oceans and seas. The European Commission had also initiated the process on international ocean governance and it aimed to mainstream regional aspects for the management of oceans.
14. Mr. Ingo Narberhaus, Germany, stated that successful regional cooperation needed fora for dialogue. This could be an expert forum or a decision-making forum. Jointly agreed targets with specific time line could also be considered as a key element for successful cooperation. He also

highlighted that commitments from parties were crucial for regional cooperation.

15. Mr. Alain Decomarmond, Seychelles, concurred that commitments toward common goals and shared issues were key for successful cooperation. For the Nairobi Convention, integrated ecosystem approach was very important to manage the shared ocean. He indicated that the Nairobi Convention started working with the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance to study how the regional mechanism could support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. He also mentioned that inter-regional knowledge exchange would be useful such as marine spatial planning experience in the Baltic Sea.
16. Ms. Svensson thanked the Panel Members and opened the floor for questions.
17. Questions were raised regarding the means to scale up the Regional Seas Programme, ways to link SDG 14 with other goals, expectation of the outcome from the UN Ocean Conference, and ways to incorporate private sector.
18. Ms. Inniss responded that the Regional Seas programmes had started mapping out regional targets against SDGs beyond SDG 14.
19. Ms. Piriz, commented that industries were regularly invited as observers at HELCOM meetings.
20. Mr. Leone gave an example of involvement of the private sector in marine litter activity.
21. Mr. Aliyev commented that it was necessary to improve the private sector engagement to benefit people as well as the marine environment.
22. Mr. Moore commented that adequate engagement of private sector was crucial as at the end of the day we were dealing with “one ocean”.
23. Mr. Campbell commented that cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional cooperation could address diverse SDG targets as these were cross-sectoral nature. Some of the Regional Seas programmes had already started addressing issues such as sustainable consumption and production.
24. H.E. Ambassador Ms. Felson commented that the implementation at the regional level could feed into the discussion at the global level.
25. Ms. Svensson thanked the participants for the active engagement and invited them for the lunch provided by the Government of Sweden.
26. The event was closed at 2:40pm.

Annex 1: Programme

Moderator: Ms. Lisa Emelia Svensson, United Nations Environment Programme

13:15 – 13:20 *Opening Remarks*

Mr. Stefan Berggren, Director for Division for Natural Environment, Ministry of the Environment and Energy, Sweden

H.E. Ambassador Ms. Janine Felson, Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Mission of Belize to the United Nations

13:20 – 13:50 *How Regional Seas programmes can support Member States in implementing ocean-related SDGs?*

Mr. Gaetano Leone, Barcelona Convention

Mr. Mahir Aliyev, Tehran Convention

Ms. Lorna Inniss, Cartagena Convention

Mr. Tommy Moore, SPREP

Ms. Laura Piriz, HELCOM

Mr. Darius Campbell, OSPAR

13:50 – 14:10 *Panel Discussion with Member States: Possible roles of Regional Seas programmes to support the implementation and review of the ocean-related SDGs*

- What are central elements for successful regional cooperation?
- How existing Regional Seas can support the implementation and review of the ocean-related SDGs?
- How can regional partnerships add value and contribute to the implementation of SDG 14?

Mr. Alain Decomarmond, Seychelles

Mr. Ingo Narberhaus, Germany

Ms. Marijana Mance, European Commission

14:10 – 14:30 *Discussion with audience*