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**Scoping Meeting on Collaboration between
Regional Seas Programmes and Regional Fisheries Bodies
In Southwest Indian Ocean**
Mahé, Seychelles, 13-14 June 2016

**Concept Note for the Scoping Meeting on
Collaboration between Regional Seas Programmes and Regional Fisheries
Bodies in the Southwest Indian Ocean**

I. Background and justification

Fishery resources make a major, irreplaceable contribution to nutrition and food security, particularly in developing countries. In addition fisheries and other marine sectors contribute to economies of many countries in terms of income and creation of employment. In many countries fish is the only affordable source of protein and several essential nutrients and therefore plays a critical role for food and nutrition security.

The capacity of the marine environment to produce the food on which many human communities depend is currently being threatened by unsustainable fishing methods and other human activities and/or by human induced activities such as climate change. For example, toxic dumping has major impacts on fish stocks and marine biodiversity.

Pollution can affect fish during their life cycle and result in the presence of chemical contaminants, making affected fish unsuitable for human consumption and export. Other human impacts from shipping and unsustainable aquaculture can introduce diseases and modify habitats, which undermine ecosystem health and adversely impact fish and associated food security. Studies of the impacts of climate change on marine and coastal habitats and fisheries also suggest that detrimental change is occurring in some areas.

There is broad agreement that such pressures on marine resources, biodiversity and ecosystems are increasing and it is expected that they will continue to do so, particularly with a growing human population. The impacts are often locally compounded, poorly documented and very seldom managed, including in developing countries. At the same time there is often limited coordination and collaboration across sectors at regional and national level to facilitate implementation of the wide range of ocean related policies, goals and management actions.

Governance and regulatory frameworks of the sectors responsible for the activities taking place within or impacting a given marine ecosystem have to be enhanced to take account of the respective environmental externalities, and maximize the social and economic benefits that can derive from marine ecosystems. An example of such efforts is the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (FAO, 2003). At the same time, it is widely recognized that there is also a need to set common conservation objectives for the sectors operating within or impacting a given ecosystem and coordinate the use of goods and services across them. It has become increasingly recognized that enhanced collaboration between existing organizations working on different aspects of ocean governance can be mutually beneficial to enhance achievement of respective goals on issues of common concern as all the human activities in shared ecosystems are interlinked and hence impact on each other.

Although this type of collaboration is still developing, experience exists in some regions of the world at maintaining or recovering the sustainability of the oceans through arrangements for cooperation between the Fisheries and Environmental agencies.

UNEP and FAO are already collaborating through various initiatives to bring the environment and fishery sectors together to strengthen collaboration on issues of common interest with the view to secure sustainable food provision based on healthy and functional marine and coastal ecosystems. One such initiative resulted in a project proposal that focuses on developing a model framework for the collaboration between regional seas programmes and regional fisheries bodies using the West, Central and Southern Africa region as the initial pilot, involving the Abidjan convention, the Fishery Committee for the Central Eastern Atlantic (CECAF), the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO) and the sub-regional commissions: Sub-regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), Fisheries Committee for the Gulf of Guinea(COREP) and the Fisheries Committee for the Western Central Atlantic (FCWC) as well as the Southeast Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO) and the Benguela Current Commission (BCC).

Furthermore, through the Canary Current LME (CCLME), the Abidjan Convention Regional Coordinating Unit with RFBs such as the Sub-regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) and the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) are working in collaboration to achieve the different goals of the LME partnership.

There are also some existing cooperation mechanisms between regional seas programmes and regional fisheries bodies. These include the OSPAR-NEAFC collective arrangements, Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Memorandum of Understanding, and the MOUs between the Abidjan Convention-and the sub-regional fisheries commissions in West and Central Africa.

The current initiative would build on the above experiences, facilitating the sharing of information and exploring the scope for collaboration on issues related to food security and ocean health between regional fisheries organizations and the regional seas programmes in other regions, starting with the Indian Oceans. The outcomes of the meeting will be fed into a global regional seas-regional fisheries bodies meeting to take place in September 2016, organized by the CBD.

II. Objectives and approach

The general objectives are as follows:

1. Facilitate dialogue between regional seas programmes and regional fisheries bodies in the region;
2. Share experience on collaborative arrangements from other regions;
3. Identify of issue/thematic areas of common interest between the relevant regional seas programmes and regional fishery bodies that can form the basis for strengthened collaboration, taking into account mandates and roles;
4. Identify areas of potential coordination related to global efforts and agreements within the cooperative frameworks of regional seas programmes and regional fisheries bodies, such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Aichi Targets;

5. Based on the good examples of cooperation between the regional seas programmes and regional fisheries bodies within and outside the target region, and the results of a similar meeting held in West Africa, formulate recommendations for cooperation between the Nairobi Convention and the regional fisheries bodies in the region;

A two phased approach is proposed: an initial one-day meeting between the secretariats to clarify the scope and develop the Agenda for a subsequent two-day Workshop where a wider participation from bureau members of the three organizations is envisaged.

It is expected that the initial planning workshop will take place through Video Conference on 14 March 2016, and that the Second workshop will take place by the end of June 2016.

Expected Outcomes:

- Strengthen coordination between Nairobi Conventions and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations in Southwest Indian Ocean
- Share the experiences and lessons learnt in Southwest Indian Ocean with other Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans and Regional Fisheries Bodies at the global meeting of regional seas and regional fisheries bodies, September 2016, in Busan, Republic of Korea.

Phase I: Initial meeting (14 March 2016)

Pre-meeting activities:

- Identify possible areas of common interest between Regional Seas Programme and Regional Fisheries Bodies in Southwest Indian Ocean

Expected outcomes:

- Identification of potential common goals for cooperation among the Secretariats
- Agreed processes and organisation of the second workshop

Expected outputs:

Meeting report with recommendations for further actions.

Proposed participants:

Secretariats of the Nairobi Convention, SWIOFC, SIOFA, IOTC, UNEP and FAO

Phase II: Second Workshop (13-14 June 2016)

Based on the discussion at the initial meeting held on 14 March 2016, it was agreed to organise the second meeting to explore further possible areas of common interest, objectives and expected outcome for collaboration and to look specifically look at possible elements for a MOU between the Nairobi Convention and SWIOFC.

Expected outcomes:

- Identification on possible areas and objectives of cooperation between the Nairobi Convention and the RFBs present
- Elements for a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Nairobi Convention and SWIOFC.