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**Coordinating Body on the
Seas of East Asia
(COBSEA)**

**Twenty-third Intergovernmental Meeting of the
Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia
(COBSEA)**

Bangkok, Thailand, 27-28 February 2017

**Report of the 23rd Intergovernmental Meeting of the
Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia**

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING OF THE MEETING***1.1 Welcome address and opening remarks by the Chair of the 23rd Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA and representative of the Government of Thailand, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)***

1. Mr. Niphon Phongsuwan, Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Resources and Environmental Research Specialist, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Government of Thailand, welcomed delegates to the 23rd Intergovernmental Meeting. He noted the environmental challenges in the region, and emphasized the importance of COBSEA Strategic Directions in determining the work of COBSEA for the next five years. He highlighted that the project “Implementing the Strategic Action Programme of the South China Sea” funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), would assist the countries in conserving and sustainably managing vulnerable habitats in the region.
2. Ms. Lisa Emelia Svensson, Coordinator of the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme and Officer-in-Charge of the COBSEA Coordinator, delivered her opening remarks. She started by describing the history of COBSEA and its Action Plan. She pointed out that the vision of the Action Plan for joint efforts for the protection and sustainable development of shared ecosystems would continue to be important for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She highlighted that regional mechanisms could play an instrumental role in the implementation and follow-up of the ocean-related SDGs. As such, COBSEA could serve as a mechanism that would provide assistance to the Participating Countries in achieving the SDGs. She concluded her remarks by emphasizing the success of COBSEA activities including the adoption of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.
3. The participants introduced themselves to the meeting.

1.2 Presentation of credentials

4. The Bureau of the Meeting examined the credentials of the representatives of countries participating in the 23rd Intergovernmental Meeting of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia, in accordance with Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, applicable mutatis mutandis to this meeting.
5. As of 10:00am of 27 February 2017, the representatives of the nine COBSEA Participating Countries were in attendance. Seven States had submitted to the COBSEA secretariat (Secretariat) their formal credentials signed by Heads of State, Heads of Government or Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which were found to be in order:

People’s Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam

6. The credentials issued by or on behalf of the Head of State or Government or by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, had been received by facsimile or in photocopy for the representatives of the following two (2) Participating Countries by the end of 27 February 2017:

Cambodia and the Philippines

7. It was approved by the meeting that both the credentials signed by or on behalf of the Head of State or Government or Minister of Foreign Affairs, received in originals, as well as the credentials signed by or on behalf of Head of State or Government or Minister of Foreign Affairs, received in facsimile or in photocopy, be also accepted on condition that the originals be submitted to the COBSEA Secretariat as soon as feasible. This brought to a total of nine (9) the Participating Countries whose representatives were participating in the meeting with credentials found to be in order.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1.3 Designation of Officers

8. In accordance with the applicable Rules of Procedure, the Participating Countries were invited to elect a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and a Rapporteur.
9. The Meeting agreed to elect the following officers:

Chairperson	Mr. Niphon Phongsuwan, Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Resources and Environmental Research Specialist, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand
Vice-Chairperson	Ms. Gu Li, Deputy Director, Division of International Organizations and Conventions International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection, China
Rapporteur	Mr. Vu Thanh Ca Director, Department of International Cooperation and Science, Technology, Viet Nam Administration of Seas and Islands

The list of participants is attached as **Annex I** of this report.

1.4 Adoption of the agenda

10. The Chair invited the Secretariat to introduce the provisional agenda of the meeting, presented as working document UNEP/ COBSEA IGM23/1. He said that the provisional agenda and the annotated provisional agenda had been circulated, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure applicable to the meeting, six weeks in advance of the meeting.
11. The Secretariat proposed to include an item under Item 7 Other Matters to inform on the Fourth Intergovernmental Review of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) to be held in October 2017 in Indonesia.

12. The Republic of Korea suggested including an item on the recruitment of the COBSEA Coordinator and the composition of the Secretariat under Item 7.
13. After considering the provisional agenda submitted by the Secretariat and the additional proposals, the meeting adopted the agenda attached as **Annex II** to this report.
14. The Chair invited the Participating Countries to make short opening statements related to their support to COBSEA.
15. Cambodia stated that coastal zone management had been important for its national development. Reassuring its support to COBSEA and its Strategic Directions for concrete actions on the Seas of East Asia, Cambodia said that it would continue to engage in regional cooperation through COBSEA for sustainable development.
16. The People's Republic of China said that China placed great importance on regional cooperation through COBSEA. While acknowledging the progress on the development of COBSEA Strategic Directions, China noted that COBSEA had faced difficulties such as the delay of the organization of this Intergovernmental Meeting. The need for joint efforts was stressed to make the regional mechanism work. China concluded by reaffirming China's commitment to the regional mechanism and encouraged all countries to respect the resolutions from previous Intergovernmental Meetings.
17. Indonesia stated that it hoped that the meeting would contribute to the sustainability of COBSEA. Indonesia reaffirmed its support to the South China Sea project, demonstrating commitments to the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme. Indonesia also emphasized that marine litter was a problem that required regional cooperation. In concluding, Indonesia urged the Participating Countries to contribute to the Trust Fund in order to keep COBSEA sustainable.
18. The Republic of Korea stated that this Intergovernmental Meeting would serve as an important opportunity to advance the COBSEA Strategic Directions and further added that it was hoped that COBSEA would be revitalized as a leading organization for the conservation of the marine environment in the region.
19. Malaysia noted that Participating Countries had benefited from the COBSEA mechanisms, but that different regional mechanisms had been developed since the establishment of COBSEA and that this required COBSEA to further define its role in the regional context. Malaysia hoped that Strategic Directions would allow COBSEA to deliver desired outcomes to the Participating Countries.
20. The Philippines stated that the protection of marine environment was important for the country and reaffirmed its commitments to COBSEA. They were currently the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and they focused on five areas to create stable and peaceful community: people-centred ASEAN; peace and stability; maritime security; resilient ASEAN; and ASEAN as a model for regional integration.
21. Singapore said that it had been participating in COBSEA since 1991. It welcomed the development of COBSEA Strategic Directions as a revitalization process of COBSEA and reassured its commitments to the regional cooperation.

22. Thailand welcomed the consideration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the draft COBSEA Strategic Directions. Thailand reaffirmed its support to the South China Sea project. It concluded by emphasizing that it was honoured to host the COBSEA Secretariat as had been decided in the 22nd Intergovernmental Meeting.
23. Viet Nam stressed that coastal ecosystems greatly contributed to its economy. It emphasized the importance of concerted efforts to protect the shared large marine ecosystem and added that COBSEA had had a vital role in coordinating efforts among countries. Viet Nam concluded by stressing that it would strongly support COBSEA Strategic Directions and the sustainability of COBSEA.

1.5 Organization of work

24. The Chair announced that the meeting would take place on 27 and 28 February 2017 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., subject to adjustment as necessary.
25. The Chair invited the Secretariat to introduce the working and information documents as presented in information document UNEP/COBSEA IGM23/INF2.
26. The Secretariat briefed the meeting participants on the logistical arrangements for the conduct of the meeting. It was agreed that the meeting would be conducted in plenary and in English.

AGENDA ITEM 3: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COBSEA ACTIVITIES 2015-2016

27. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present a summary of the Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme on the implementation of COBSEA activities carried out during the period 2015-2016, which had been presented as working document UNEP/COBSEA IGM 23/2/Rev1.
28. The COBSEA Secretariat presented the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, highlighting key areas where COBSEA had impacted through the implementation of the workplan. In relation to the Resolutions of the 22nd Intergovernmental Meeting, it was noted that due to the delay in hiring a consultant, the Extraordinary Meeting had not been organised.
29. The Secretariat further presented the financial performance of the East Asian Seas Trust Fund (Trust Fund) for the period of 2015-2016, prepared in accordance with the UN Financial Rules and Procedure and the financial Rules and Procedure for COBSEA adopted at the 22nd Intergovernmental Meeting. The total contribution to the Trust Fund during the period 2015-2016 as of 31 November 2016 was US\$ 444,073.
30. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present the resolutions of the Second Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly that are of particular importance to COBSEA, which had been presented as working document UNEP/COBSEA IGM23/6/Rev1 and UNEP/COBSEA IGM23/INF 6

31. The Secretariat presented an overview of the resolutions, relevant to COBSEA. Responding to resolution 2/10 on Oceans and seas, the COBSEA Secretariat had already conducted a mapping exercise to compare regional targets against SDGs as presented in Annex 1 of UNEP/COBSEA IGM23/6/Rev1. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of the resolution, the Regional Seas Strategic Directions (2017-2020) were presented at this meeting and considered to prepare the COBSEA Strategic Directions. Paragraph 13 of resolution 2/10 encouraged contracting parties to existing regional seas conventions to consider the possibility of increasing the regional coverage. It was pointed out that COBSEA countries might envisage inviting other countries to participate in the Action Plan such as Myanmar, Brunei Darussalam, and Timor-Este.
32. The Secretariat informed the meeting that responding to Paragraph 17 of resolution 2/10, the United Nations Environment Programme had been preparing a proposal for the update, revision or replacement of its 2011 marine and coastal strategy. The United Nations Environment Programme aimed to strengthen the Regional Seas Programme as a key priority and in this regard to make COBSEA's role stronger in the sustainable management of oceans in the region. The Secretariat also informed the meeting that the Clean Seas Campaign had been launched to address marine litter and the interested countries would be invited to participate in the campaign. The opportunities to accelerate the implementation of the COBSEA's Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter were highlighted. The Secretariat concluded by inviting the Participating Countries to participate in the UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (June 2017), Our Ocean Conference (October 2017), and United Nations Environment Assembly (December 2017) to showcase the work of COBSEA.
33. The Chairperson invited comments and questions on the reports presented.
34. In relation to the proposals to address marine litter, Viet Nam said that it would resubmit the proposal on marine litter. The Philippines requested the Secretariat to provide updates on the progress of the proposal submitted to the Secretariat.
35. Cambodia requested the Secretariat to provide further information on the status of the implementation of resolution 1 of the 21st Intergovernmental Meeting. The People's Republic of China also requested a detailed breakdown of the total contribution of US\$ 444,073 collected during the period 2015 -2016. The Chair proposed to address the issues under Agenda Item 5 and the meeting agreed on the proposal.
36. The Republic of Korea stated that it had paid the full amount pledged in Korean won and the difference shown in Table 2 of the report was a result of difference in exchange rates.
37. Malaysia stated that due to national issues, it had not been able to meet its contribution for 2016. The delegate stated that Malaysia would inform the Secretariat as soon as the issues were resolved.
38. The Chair concluded the discussion by expressing appreciation to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the COBSEA Secretariat for the progress made during the biennium 2015-2016.

AGENDA ITEM 4: COBSEA STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

39. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present the draft COBSEA Strategic Directions (2017-2021), as contained in working document UNEP/COBSEA IGM23/3/Rev1.
40. The Secretariat presented the draft COBSEA Strategic Directions prepared by a consultant pursuant to Resolution 1 of the 22nd Intergovernmental Meeting, through which the Participating Countries “*[A]gree to entrust the consultant, to be recruited by UNEP, to identify the current priorities and respective strategic directions for COBSEA, prepare financial scenarios and a cost-benefit analysis, consult with potential donors and partners, prepare a resource mobilization strategy for COBSEA as well as a detailed workplan for the biennium 2016-2017 to be presented to the Second Extraordinary Meeting*”.
41. The Secretariat explained that the Strategic Directions aimed to build upon the New Strategic Directions for COBSEA (2008-2012) and the global agenda set since then, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By analysing the current regional context and priorities, the draft Strategic Directions envisioned a strengthened COBSEA. Four operational focal areas were proposed: sustainable management of coastal and marine resources; improved management of land-based pollution; scaling up habitat protection; and governance of COBSEA.
42. The Secretariat presented proposed key elements under these four focal areas. It was clarified that the Secretariat understood that the current geographical coverage of the Action Plan was the marine environment and coastal areas of the States that are currently participating in the Action Plan.
43. The Secretariat stressed that the Strategic Directions were presented as a draft and further suggested to organise a consultation process. This would allow finalizing the document to be presented for consideration by the Intergovernmental Meeting. The Secretariat emphasized that the process was owned by the Participating Countries and ownership was key for successful development and implementation of the Strategic Directions.
44. The Chair invited comments and questions on the report and the Secretariat’s proposal to finalize the Strategic Directions.
45. Thailand welcomed the proposed focal areas and the alignment of the draft Strategic Directions with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
46. Several countries emphasized the importance of land-based sources of pollution. The Philippines noted that national inter-agency coordination would be required to address land-based pollution. Viet Nam pointed out that greater specificity in addressing land-based sources of pollution was warranted and suggested a focus on marine plastic litter and microplastics. Indonesia sought clarification on whether sea-based pollution would also be considered. Singapore said that should there be consideration on sea-based sources of marine pollution, initiatives that affect international shipping should be discussed under the International Maritime Organisation. Likewise, efforts related to protected marine and coastal areas should be aligned with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

47. Several countries concurred that it would be important for COBSEA to have a flagship programme or project, to bring concrete value to participating countries, to differentiate it from other organisations and to avoid duplication of work.
48. The delegate of the Philippines commented that COBSEA was a coordinating body and could coordinate different initiatives in the region. COBSEA could bring together different regional mechanisms such as the Coral Triangle Initiative, the ASEAN biodiversity working group and Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA). Viet Nam also added that the coordination role of COBSEA could be unique in streamlining national policies for the shared marine ecosystems. Singapore commented that it was important for COBSEA to come up with initiatives that were of interest and benefit to all Participating Countries. Singapore added that there should be coherent coordination of COBSEA activities with other relevant bodies to avoid overlapping work where possible.
49. The Participating Countries noted that land-based sources of pollution including marine litter were identified to be one of the priorities under the COBSEA Strategic Directions.
50. Thailand welcomed the inclusion of Marine Spatial Planning as a key element. Malaysia commented that the draft was not clear about how the issue of spatial information and security would be addressed in the framework of Marine Spatial Planning. Thailand further proposed to include management effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas. Singapore proposed including coastal water quality as an area of focus for COBSEA given that member countries should be interested in coastal water management. Issues related to coastal water quality could include ways to manage and address discharges from industrial and commercial sources. Indonesia suggested that strategic environment assessment be included since it could be used to integrate all development activities in coastal areas. The People's Republic of China stated that nutrient pollution was a key element under the second focal area and further proposed the inclusion of technology transfer on this issue. On the budgetary implication of proposed key elements, Malaysia requested clarification on the cost implication of the establishment of laboratory networks.
51. The Republic of Korea pointed out that some elements in the draft Strategic Directions were found to be overlapping with other existing initiatives, including the establishment of regional marine protected area network which was already being dealt under the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), YSLME (Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem) Project, NEASPEC (Northeast Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation). Viet Nam also sought clarification on the overlapping initiatives between COBSEA and NOWPAP. In addition, the Republic of Korea emphasized that COBSEA needs to develop a flagship project that serves as a brand for COBSEA .
52. The Republic of Korea and Singapore pointed out that the period of the COBSEA Strategic Directions, proposed to be 2017-2021, be redefined as the Secretariat proposed it to be adopted at the next Intergovernmental Meeting.
53. The Republic of Korea suggested reconsideration on the use of ASEAN water quality standard since not all Participating Countries were ASEAN members and requested COBSEA to develop more projects in which non-ASEAN countries can actively participate. The Republic of Korea further stated that it is necessary to include detailed roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Board in the COBSEA Strategic Directions.

54. The People's Republic of China commented that it would be crucial to consider time and resource limitations. The strategy would be difficult to implement without funds and would thus require clear focus. Key elements needed to be in line with the concerns and priorities of the Participating Countries.
55. Malaysia and the People's Republic of China sought clarification on how COBSEA would support the implementation and review process of the SDGs. The People's Republic of China requested that the background and logic of the Strategic Directions be presented.
56. Cambodia stated that the national consultation would require more time. Malaysia suggested that the Secretariat participate in national consultations to provide information on the process for development of Strategic Directions.
57. The People's Republic of China proposed to invite observers to the meeting to share their views on the draft Strategic directions. Responding to the proposal, the Chair opened the floor to the observers. The Secretariat of NOWPAP, PEMSEA, the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water, Food and Agriculture Organisation of UN (FAO), and UNEP/GEF task manager shared their views. They concurred that COBSEA would need to build on ongoing and past regional efforts and define its unique role.
58. The Participating Countries agreed on a timeline for further development and finalization of the Strategic Directions, including the provision of written comments on the draft to the Secretariat which would incorporate priority issues, and they urged to organize a workshop to finalize the draft Strategic Directions. The Secretariat noted that budgetary constraints had to be considered when assisting in national consultations on the Strategic Directions.

AGENDA ITEM 5: WORK PLAN AND BUDGET FOR COBSEA FOR THE 2017-2018 BIENNIUM

59. The meeting agreed that the Agenda Item 5 would be a closed session to the observers.
60. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present the draft work plan and budget for COBSEA for the biennium as contained in the working document UNEP/COBSEA IGM 23/4/Rev1.
61. The Secretariat presented the work plan and the budget, which had been prepared based on the current level of contribution and the estimated contribution level of US\$ 340,000 from 2018, as in Resolution 1 of the 21st Intergovernmental Meeting. The Secretariat explained that the UN Financial Rules and the specific procedures for the operation of COBSEA were applicable to the management of the Trust Fund. The Secretariat referred to Resolution 1 of the 21st Intergovernmental Meeting and its Appendix 2 to highlight how it was important to raise the contribution level to meet the annual level of US\$ 340,000 so that the Secretariat could conduct the activities to implement the Action Plan. The Secretariat clarified that the term "Governance" was used in the budget table in keeping with the new resource management system, UMOJA.
62. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present the draft Terms of Reference of the COBSEA Coordinator (UNEP/COBSEA IGM 23/4/Rev1 Annex 1). The Secretariat presented the Terms of Reference and indicated that the Participating Countries could provide comments. The Secretariat explained, however, that the final job description for the COBSEA Coordinator was subjected to the UN rules and regulations on

recruitment. For this reason, it might not be possible to incorporate all comments received by countries in the final version of the job description.

63. The Secretariat presented the proposed budget for the period 2017-2018. Bearing in mind that the Trust Fund contributions for 2017 would not meet the minimum level agreed in Resolution 1 of the 21st Intergovernmental Meeting, the Secretariat proposed an interim solution whereby 50 per cent of the time of an existing staff member at P4-level would be allocated to serve as an acting COBSEA Coordinator during 2017.
64. After rounds of comments by the Participating Countries, the Terms of Reference were reviewed and discussed as in **Appendix 2 of the Resolution** in Annex III to this report. The Participating Countries indicated that more detailed resource mobilization strategies would be needed in addition to the COBSEA Strategic Directions. In terms of the recruitment process, the Secretariat clarified that the post would be advertised on the UN Careers portal for two months. It was agreed that the recruitment process for the COBSEA coordinator should be launched as soon as possible after the Intergovernmental Meeting and that Participating Countries would be notified upon opening of the position on the portal. It was clarified, however, that upon selection of the successful candidate, following UN recruitment procedures, the letter of appointment would be issued only when the Trust Fund reached the annual minimum contribution level of US\$340,000.
65. The Chair invited comments and questions on the work plan and budget. It was agreed that the term “programme of work” would be used for consistency. The Participating Countries stressed the importance of Intergovernmental Meetings in evaluating the implementation of the programme of work.
66. Several countries suggested that it would be better to have the document finalized and adopted by the end of the year. After discussing possible options, the Participating Countries agreed that an extraordinary Intergovernmental Meeting would be organised by the end of October 2017 to adopt the Strategic Directions. Countries interested in hosting the extraordinary meeting would inform the Secretariat of its intention. If no offer were to be made, the Secretariat would host the extraordinary meeting.
67. Several countries commented that a consultant had been hired to prepare the Strategic Directions and there was no need to recruit another consultant to finalize the same document. The meeting agreed not to allocate the funds to hire another consultant for 2017 and instead allocate those funds towards the extraordinary meeting.
68. The People’s Republic of China announced an increase in its annual contribution to US\$60,000, effective from 2017. The Republic of China requested the United Nations Environment Programme to provide further support to COBSEA as had the Participating Countries.
69. The Republic of Korea welcomed that the Government of China would increase its annual contribution to \$60,000 from 2017 and informed that an increase of contribution to US\$ 60,000 from 2017 in accordance with Resolution 1 of the 21st Intergovernmental Meeting could not be assured due to national budgetary processes. Taking into consideration of difficulties in persuading the relevant ministry, the Republic of Korea recommended that COBSEA Secretariat facilitate the revitalization of COBSEA activities including

the recruitment of a new coordinator within the current financial resources regardless of its additional increase in contribution.

70. The Chair thanked the People's Republic of China for its increased contribution to the Trust Fund, and noted the explanation by the Republic of Korea on difficulties in increasing contribution due to internal approval requirements.
71. The Philippines suggested for the Secretariat to have a contingency plan so that the activities of COBSEA would not be compromised in case of budgetary short falls.
72. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present the proposed timeline for the finalization of the COBSEA Strategic Directions.
73. After discussion, it was agreed to set the timeline for the finalization of the COBSEA Strategic Directions as in **Appendix 3** of the Resolution in **Annex III** to this report.
74. The Participating Countries of COBSEA approved the workplan and budget for 2017 and the indicative budget for 2018. It is attached as in **Appendix 1** of the Resolution in **Annex III** adopted by this Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 6: STATUS OF GEF SOUTH CHINA SEA PROJECT

75. The Chair invited the United Nations Environment Programme to present the current status of the GEF-funded projects as presented in working document UNEP/COBSEA IGM 23/5.
76. The United Nations Environment Programme presented the report, informing that the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility had endorsed the project "Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea" on 6 November 2016. The project aimed to assist countries in meeting the targets of the coastal and marine environment component such as mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass and wetlands. The inception phase would be initiated no later than June 2017. The other project "Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand" had also been endorsed by the Global Environment Facility in January 2016. The Project Cooperation Agreement between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC) had been signed and the project had been launched in November 2016.
77. The Chair invited comments and questions on the progress report.
78. Responding to the comments and questions, the United Nations Environment Programme clarified the inception phase process, the recruitment, and reporting lines of the project manager. The recruitment process would follow the UN recruitment process. Concerns were raised on the reporting line of the South China Sea project manager to the COBSEA Coordinator, who might not be on board when the project would be initiated. The need for a transparent implementation modality was stressed. While the projects would contribute to COBSEA and its Action Plan through the Strategic Directions, the projects would have to maintain integrity.

AGENDA ITEM 7: OTHER MATTERS

79. The Chair invited the secretariat of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) to present information on the Forth Intergovernmental Review of GPA.
80. The GPA secretariat provided an overview of the work of the GPA, informed the meeting that the Fourth Intergovernmental Review of GPA would be held in October 2017 in Bali, Indonesia, and encouraged COBSEA Participating Countries to participate in the meeting.
81. The Republic of Korea noted that the topic proposed to be addressed in relation to the hiring of a new Coordinator and the structure of the Secretariat had already been addressed under Agenda Item 5, and withdrew the proposed item.
82. The Chair invited proposals and offers from the Participating Countries for the venue of the 24th Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA to be held in 2018. As there were no proposals, it was agreed that the Secretariat would have further consultations with the Participating Countries on this issue.

AGENDA ITEM 8: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

83. The meeting adopted the Resolution attached as **Annex III** of this report. Due to time constraints, the Chair proposed that comments on the meeting report be provided to the Secretariat in writing. The meeting agreed to provide written comments to the Secretariat for finalization of the meeting report.

AGENDA ITEM 9: CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

84. Upon completion of the business of the meeting, the Chairperson declared the closure of the meeting on 28 February 2017 at 5:30pm.

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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ANNEX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Organization of the meeting
 - a) Designation of officers;
 - b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - c) Organization of work.
3. Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme on the implementation of COBSEA activities 2015-2016
4. COBSEA Strategic Directions (2017-2021)
5. Work Plan and Budget for 2017-2018 Biennium
6. Status of GEF South China Sea Project
7. Date and Venue of the next meeting
8. Other matters
9. Adoption of the report
10. Closure of the meeting

ANNEX III

Resolution of the 23rd Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA

The Participating Countries of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia, taking part in its 23rd Intergovernmental Meeting:

Showing appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme for its commitments demonstrated through financial, human and technical support including assistance to the Secretariat, the implementation of the Action Plan for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Areas of the East Asian Region (East Asian Seas Action Plan), mobilization of funds and the management of the East Asian Seas Trust Fund;

Recalling resolution 1, adopted by the 21st Intergovernmental Meeting of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) and particularly our agreement on the proposed target annual budget for COBSEA as the minimum financial requirement for its maintained level of implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan and Secretariat services;

Noting our decision, as reflected in the East Asian Seas Action Plan, that this Action Plan is expected to be financially self-supporting through the East Asian Seas Trust Fund or any other approved and appropriate mechanisms;

Recalling also the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of A/RES/70/1 Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and welcoming the inclusion therein of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its commitment on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans;

Recognizing the role of COBSEA in supporting the implementation, follow-up and review of the ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals;

Noting the Regional Seas Strategic Directions (2017-2020) and the need of enhanced cooperation with other Regional Seas programmes for sharing of best practices and information;

Noting further the progress made in the development of COBSEA Strategic Directions during the intersessional period;

Noting also that the Fourth Intergovernmental Review of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities will be held in Indonesia in October 2017.

1. *Thank* the Government of Thailand for hosting the 23rd Intergovernmental Meeting;
2. *Reiterate* our determination to strengthen the implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan and its current priorities through an enhanced and revitalized COBSEA;
3. *Reiterate* our decision that long term sustainability requires that all the participating countries meet the annual budget of US\$ 340,000, agreed in Resolution 1 of the 21st Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA;
4. *Thank* the Participating Countries who have already pledged and paid their increased contributions towards the achievement of the agreed target budget and *request* those that have not done so to undertake further national consultation on pledges, in line with Resolution 1 of the 21st Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA;
5. *Approve* the budget for 2017 and the indicative budget for 2018, as contained in Appendix 1 to this resolution;
6. *Request* the COBSEA Secretariat to initiate the process for recruitment of a full-time COBSEA Coordinator, following the Terms of Reference agreed by the Meeting, as provided in Appendix 2 to this resolution, and in accordance with the UN rules and regulations on recruitment, and the letter of offer to the successful candidate will be issued after the agreed annual scale of contribution is confirmed;
7. *Request* the COBSEA Secretariat to further develop COBSEA strategic directions based on comments from the Participating Countries expressed in this Intergovernmental Meeting, current regional priorities and priorities expressed in the 2030 Agenda, and agree for the Participating Countries to undertake national consultations and to submit comments on the draft Strategic Directions in writing to the COBSEA Secretariat, as per the timeline provided in Appendix 3 to this resolution ;
8. *Also request* the COBSEA Secretariat to organize a consultative workshop to work towards finalizing the COBSEA Strategic Directions in June or July 2017;
9. *Agree* to hold an Extraordinary Intergovernmental Meeting in October or November 2017 for the adoption of the COBSEA Strategic Directions, and invite offers to host the Extraordinary Intergovernmental Meeting from participating countries, to be submitted to the Secretariat by the end of March 2017. In the event no participating country offers to host the meeting, the COBSEA Secretariat will convene the meeting in Bangkok;
10. *Decide* to hold the 24th Intergovernmental Meeting in 2018, which shall approve the COBSEA work plan and budget for the biennium 2019-2020;

APPENDIX 1:

ADOPTED BUDGET FOR THE PERIOD 2017 TO 2018

Proposed Budget for the Secretariat of COBSEA 2017-2018			
Budget Year		2017	2018
Personnel Component			
Coordinator		74,920*	179,500
Programme Officer		0	0
Administrative Assistant (G6)		78,650	78,650
Senior Secretary (G6)		0	0
Administration and Programme Support (HQ/ROAP)		20,000**	0
Consultants		0	0
Sub-total: Personnel		173,570	258,150
Activities			
Governance	COBSEA IGM 23	25,000	0
Governance	COBSEA IGM24	0	20,000***
Governance	Extra ordinary IGM in the end of October	20,000	
Governance	Travel	10,000	5,000
Governance	Proposal developments	0	0
Governance	Consultative meeting to finalize the draft COBSEA Strategy and to prepare the SDG implementation outlook	25,000	0
Sub-total: Activity		80,000	25,000
Operational component			
Rent		10,000	10,000
Office Equipment and Misc.		9,000	9,000
Sub-total Operational component		19,000	19,000
Grand total		272,570	302,150
13% Programme support cost (PSC)		35,434	39,279.5
Grand Total with PSC		308,004	341,429.5

APPENDIX 2

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COBSEA COORDINATOR

COBSEA Coordinator Programme Officer - P4

Organizational Setting and Reporting Relationships: The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. UNEP Ecosystems Division works with international and national partners, providing technical assistance and advisory services for the implementation of environmental policy, and strengthening the environmental management capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. This post is located in the UNEP/Ecosystems Division Secretariat of the Coordinating Body in Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) in Bangkok duty station. The Programme Officer will directly report to the Coordinator of the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch.

Responsibilities: Within delegated authority, the Programme Officer will be responsible for the following duties:

1. General coordination and implementation of the Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Areas of the East Asian Seas Region (the Action Plan):
 - a) Implement the Action Plan;
 - b) Evaluate the programme for the implementation of the Action Plan;
 - c) Regularly consult with the participating countries in the region on issues relevant to the Action Plan;
 - d) Ensure coordination with other international, regional and national organizations in the region;
 - e) Transmit notifications and other information relevant to the implementation of the East Asian Seas Region Action Plan to the participating countries;
 - f) Initiate and coordinate outreach activities and represent the COBSEA Secretariat at relevant regional and international meetings;
 - g) Ensure dialogue and cooperation among the participating countries.
 - h) Coordinate the preparation of intergovernmental meetings of the participating countries;
 - i) Organize and prepare written outputs to be presented to the COBSEA participating countries;
 - j) Prepare and implement resource mobilization strategies.

2. General management of the COBSEA Secretariat:
 - a) Review human and financial resource requirements for programme implementation and make recommendations to the participating countries;
 - b) Supervise professional and general service staff;
 - c) Coordinate the financial management of projects supported by the East Asian Seas Trust Fund in close cooperation with the Budget and Funds Management Service of the United Nations Office in Nairobi;
 - d) Implement the budgetary policies of the COBSEA programme, determining priorities for budget allocation;

- e) Monitor the performance of activities and projects;
- f) Assist the Division Director of Ecosystems Division, Coordinator of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme and other heads of organizational units of UNEP in the formulation of policies and activities.

3. Performs other duties as required.

Work implies frequent interaction with the following:

Establish and maintain relationships with counterparts, senior officers and technical staff in relevant Secretariat units and in UN funds, programs and other UN specialized agencies; Representatives and officials in national governments, international organizations, consultants.

Results Expected:

Develops, implements, evaluates, effective leadership and management of major projects and teams at COBSEA; demonstrates timely delivery of outputs in accordance with overall objectives and policies. Plays a lead role in identifying significant issues and develops well-reasoned, innovative approaches to deal with these issues. Serves as an effective spokesperson internally and externally and forms strong partnerships with relevant parties.

Competencies:

- **Professionalism:** Knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts and approaches relevant to particular sector, functional area or other specialized field. Ability to identify issues, analyze and participate in the resolution of issues/problems. Ability to conduct data collection using various methods. Conceptual analytical and evaluative skills to conduct independent research and analysis, including familiarity with and experience in the use of various research sources, including electronic sources on the internet, intranet and other databases. Ability to apply judgment in the context of assignments given, plan own work and manage conflicting priorities. Shows pride in work and in achievements; demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results; is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns; shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges; remains calm in stressful situations. Takes responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives and ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work.
- **Communication:** Speaks and writes clearly and effectively; listens to others, correctly interprets messages from others and responds appropriately; asks questions to clarify, and exhibits interest in having two-way communication; tailors language, tone, style and format to match audience; demonstrates openness in sharing information and keeping people informed.
- **Accountability:** Takes ownership of all responsibilities and honours commitments; delivers outputs for which one has responsibility within prescribed time, cost and quality standards; operates in compliance with organizational regulations and rules; supports subordinates, provides oversight and takes responsibility for delegated assignments; takes personal responsibility for his/her own shortcomings and those of the work unit, where applicable.
- **Client Orientation:** Considers all those to whom services are provided to be “clients” and seeks to see things from clients’ point of view; establishes and maintains productive partnerships with clients by gaining their trust and respect; identifies clients’ needs and matches them to appropriate solutions; monitors ongoing developments inside and outside the clients’ environment to keep informed and anticipate problems; keeps clients informed of progress or setbacks in projects; meets timeline for delivery of products or services to client.

Qualifications:

Education:

Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in business administration, management, economics, marine or freshwater related science or a related field. A first-level university degree in combination with qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.

Experience:

A minimum of seven years of progressively responsible experience in project or programme management, administration or related area of which some should be at the international level in formulation and co-ordination of multi-disciplinary national and international projects. Familiarity with the UN system would be an advantage. Knowledge of international donor programmes including GEF and experience with international policy setting processes desirable.

Language:

Fluency in one of the working languages of the UN Secretariat, English or French, (both oral and written) is required; knowledge of the other is desirable. Knowledge of another UN official language is an advantage.

APPENDIX 3:

ADOPTED TIMELINE FOR THE FINALIZATION OF COBSEA STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Date	Item
31 March 2017	Second draft sent out
31 May 2017	Deadline for the submission of written comments to the second draft
	Preparation of a second draft incorporating written comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include priorities expressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development • Use of the United Nations Environment Programme guidance document for the preparation of SDG implementation outlook
June/July 2017	Organisation of a workshop Third draft Finalize the draft
Second half of September 2017	Consultation of the final document incorporating comments from the consultation workshop with COBSEA countries
September 2017	Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific
End October / early November 2017	Organisation of extraordinary Intergovernmental Meeting (host to be determined in March 2017)