



Distr.: General  
23 December 2020

English only



**United Nations  
Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment  
Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment Programme  
Fifth session**

Nairobi (online), 22–26 February 2021\*  
Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*\*

**International environmental policy and  
governance issues**

**Information on implementation of resolution 4/11 on protection  
of the marine environment from land-based activities\*\*\***

**Note by the Executive Director**

**Introduction**

1. Marine pollution from land-based activities poses environmental, economic, health, aesthetic and cultural threats, including degradation of marine and coastal habitats and ecosystems and the services they provide. It is a transboundary issue, requiring cooperation and action at national, regional and global level. The Manila Declaration 2012 identifies three priority source categories of land-based marine pollution: nutrients, marine litter and wastewater, and the need for mainstreaming of the protection of ecosystems from threats caused by increased nutrients, wastewater and marine litter and microplastics was emphasized in the Bali Declaration 2018.
2. In its resolution 4/11, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), inter alia, agreed to enhance capacity-building, know-how, lessons learned and knowledge-sharing through collaboration and partnerships, to improve coordination and support for work on land-based pollution and foster linkages with the regional seas programmes. The resolution further invites Member States to take the initiative in protecting the marine environment from land-based activities at the national and regional levels, and requested the Executive Director of UNEP to provide technical assistance, subject to the availability of resources, though, inter alia, the regional seas programmes, the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML), the Global Wastewater Initiative (GW<sup>2</sup>I) and the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA).
3. The resolutions recognized the efforts and actions that Member States, together with other stakeholders, are undertaking, acknowledged the progress made to build capacity in terms of human

\* In accordance with the decisions taken at the meeting of the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly held on 8 October 2020 and at the joint meeting of the Bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 1 December 2020, the fifth session of the Assembly is expected to adjourn on 23 February 2021 and resume as an in-person meeting in February 2022.

\*\* UNEP/EA.5/1/Rev.1.

\*\*\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

and institutional resources, and noted the initiative by the Government of Indonesia to establish an independent regional capacity centre in Bali.

## **I. Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/11**

### **A. Establishment and development of the Regional Capacity Centre for Clean Seas**

4. The Regional Capacity Centre for Clean Seas (RC3S, ‘the Centre’) was established in 2019 by the Government of Indonesia towards becoming a hub for strengthening capacity building in the field of protection of the marine environment from land-based activities, with a particular focus on nutrients, wastewater, and marine litter and microplastics. Key steps in the development of the Centre included consultation organized by Indonesia with member states and other stakeholders, in the context of a High-level Dialogue on marine pollution from land-based activities in Katowice, Poland, December 2018; bilateral discussions on the margins of the Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific in Singapore in January 2019, and a UNEA-4 marine litter tent side event titled ‘Capacity initiative to protect marine environment from land-based activities’.

5. RC3S aims to leverage multi-stakeholder collaboration and to assist countries in the development of their national capacities towards protecting the marine environment from land-based activities. It encourages exchange of information, scientific and technical expertise as well as collaborative action and partnership. Through its activities, the Center strengthens and works towards the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Global Wastewater Initiative and the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management. Work encompasses three main themes: knowledge management; capacity building and awareness; and solution models. The ultimate goal of RC3S is to achieve interregional or global-wide integration in the protection of coastal and marine ecosystems.

6. Following adoption of resolution 4/11, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia and the Secretariat of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) jointly organized a regional Consultation Meeting on the RC3S, held in Jakarta, Indonesia, 8-9 April 2019. The discussed and provided recommendations on Centre objectives, governance and institutional arrangements, in order to support Indonesia in its efforts to develop the Centre as a contribution to regional cooperation on addressing common marine environmental priorities, as well as to provide guidance on the role of COBSEA in further development, establishment and operation of the Centre. Meeting outcomes including revised Terms of Reference for the Centre were presented for consideration by the 24<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA, held in Bali, Indonesia in June 2019.

7. The 24<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA encouraged Indonesia to further develop the RC3S, aiming at making it a COBSEA Regional Activity Centre (RAC), in line with the Guidance on the Establishment and Operation of COBSEA Regional Activity Centres<sup>1</sup> and drawing on the experiences of other Regional Seas programmes. The Meeting further requested the COBSEA Secretariat to work closely with the Government of Indonesia to develop the RC3S toward becoming a COBSEA RAC, for consideration at the 25<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA in 2021.

### **B. Progress made in implementation of activities by the Regional Capacity Centre for Clean Seas**

8. Since its establishment, RC3S has implemented a range of activities responding to resolution 4/11, focusing on knowledge management; capacity building and awareness; and solution models. A few activities are highlighted here:

(a) The Centre has established a knowledge platform to manage and produce material such as policy briefs and scientific papers;

(b) To enhance capacity building and sharing of technical knowledge, the Centre has organized several international trainings including a workshop on data and information management of Large Marine Ecosystems;

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/cobsea/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/guidance-establishment-and-operation-cobsea-regional-activity>.

(c) The Centre has built partnerships and promoted public awareness through community engagement activities such as coastal clean-ups;

(d) Pilot projects are being carried out with the aim of developing solution models e.g. to increase waste collection and reduce waste leakage;

(e) A Training of Trainers on Monitoring and Assessment of Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics was jointly organized by RC3S, COBSEA, and GPML, in September in 2019<sup>2</sup>. This has contributed to laying a foundation for further activities towards implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter<sup>3</sup>, including development of harmonized national marine litter monitoring programmes and compiling national source inventories to support marine litter action planning.

9. Further detailed information on the full range of activities of the Centre is presented in the report “Regional Capacity Centre for Clean Seas Working Agenda – Results in 2019 and Activities in 2020”.<sup>4</sup>

## II. Progress made by the three global partnerships under the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Landbased Activities

### A. Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML)

10. The Global Partnership on Marine Litter and its partners continued their efforts against marine litter through multiple activities. One of these activities is awareness-raising and capacity-building. The partnership organized several webinars on relevant marine litter-related issues, together with its partners and regional nodes. The partnership also organized the *Turning the Tide on Marine Plastics* dialogue with the goal of discussing actions that UNEA 5 should take on marine plastic litter. It also discussed how technology, finance, and initiatives by stakeholders contribute to robust policy action in support of the ambition to eliminate all discharge of litter into the ocean in the long-term. Another milestone was the organization of the High-Level Political Forum side-event on Engaging Industry through the Global Partnership on Marine Litter to deliver Sustainable Development Goals-14 (SDG14). This online event highlighted the need for accelerated and concerted action and demonstrated examples of industry engagement through transformative pathways. Finally, the partnership supported the roll out of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Marine Litter in 2019 and 2020. This free course was developed by UNEP and the Open Universiteit of the Netherlands and is now available in 10 languages.

### B. Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM)

11. During this period and following the adoption of the UN Resolution on Sustainable Nitrogen Management, the government of Sri Lanka in collaboration with other GPNM stakeholders led in the Launch of the UN Campaign on Sustainable Nitrogen management in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 23–24 October 2019. Global leaders, technical experts and major groups stakeholders in attendance agreed on the urgent need to consider ‘Nutrients Use Efficiency’ to embrace the global nitrogen challenge affecting our water bodies, tourism industries, food production and the entire ecosystems. On phosphorus management at the global level, the GPNM with resources from the previous PoW nutrient management project contributed to the development of the report *Our Phosphorus Futures* (OFP), in collaboration with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology through an award to the CEH from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). On capacity-building and awareness raising, the partnership also organized numerous webinars on nutrients-related matters, including the emerging issue of sargassum.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/cobsea/events/workshop/training-trainers-monitoring-and-assessment-marine-plastic-litter-and-microplastics>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/cobsea/resources/policy-and-strategy/cobsea-regional-action-plan-marine-litter-2019-rap-mali>.

<sup>4</sup> Regional Capacity Centre for Clean Seas Working Agenda – Results in 2019 and Activities in 2020. <https://www.unenvironment.org/cobsea/resources/other/regional-capacity-center-clean-seas-rc3s-working-agenda>.

### **C. Global Wastewater Initiative (GW<sup>2</sup>I)**

12. During this period, the Global Wastewater Initiative undertook a review of its effectiveness with the goal of enhancing efforts against wastewater pollution. A round of surveys and interviews were conducted with the members of the Initiative, and their opinions reflected in a report that is now the basis for enhancing the GW<sup>2</sup>I's communication, financial resources, implementation capacity, and leadership. Several working groups were created to support the implementation of the recommendations. The Initiative has continued implementing its activities in the field of policy, technology, awareness-raising and private sector engagement. Specifically, this includes the organization of webinars on wastewater-related issues and the release of stories and outreach material on the same subject; of policy and technical documents aimed at providing guidance on sustainable wastewater management, such as for example on faecal sludge management and on addressing water pollution by plastic and microplastics. The Initiative also implemented demonstration projects together with some of its members, for example in Malaysia, where a demonstration project to tackle wastewater pollution in a marine national park was launched in August 2020. The GW<sup>2</sup>I Initiative also fostered collaboration between stakeholders such as for example the GPNM, and other platforms for joint activities against wastewater pollution. Finally, the Initiative is contributing to the launch of the Wastewater Facility, which is in the pipeline and has been one area of focus of the GPA and UNEP Science Division, to leverage additional funding from the private sector and scale up efforts against wastewater pollution.

---