



## Announcement

### *Montevideo Programme Environmental Law Seminar:*

## **Laws to promote environmental sustainability of oceans and seas**

The secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will convene an environmental law seminar “*Laws to promote environmental sustainability of oceans and seas*” in Panama City, Panama on 9 and 10 July 2015. The working languages of the seminar are English and Spanish only.

As recognized in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development - “The future we want”, oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth’s ecosystem and are critical to sustaining it. Conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources are important for sustainable development. Importance of conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond the areas of national jurisdiction is also noted. Through international treaties and other international arrangements as well as national legislation and other measures, efforts have been made to handle those issues. However, there is growing international concern in a number of areas. The health of oceans and marine biodiversity are negatively affected by marine pollution, including marine debris, especially plastic, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals and nitrogen-based compounds, from a number of marine and land-based sources, including shipping and land run-off. Furthermore, addressing ocean acidification and impact of climate change to marine ecosystems and coastal areas and their resources, there is the need for collective action to prevent further ocean acidification, as well as to enhance the resilience of marine ecosystems. Concern has been expressed also on the potential environmental impacts of ocean fertilization. The United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP, in resolution 1/6 adopted at its first session in June 2014, also called for action on marine debris and microplastics. Among a range of measures required to address those issues, the relevant legal frameworks, both at the national and international levels, should be further strengthened and effectively implemented, and where appropriate, opportunities for enhancing synergy between separate but inter-related instruments and arrangements might be sought.

Those issues are addressed also in the Fourth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme IV), adopted by the UNEP Governing Council in February 2009 as a broad strategy for the international law community and UNEP in formulating the activities in the field of the environmental law for the decade 2010-2019 (since then the UNEP Governing Council was transformed into the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP in March 2013). This seminar is held in this context.

The purpose of this international seminar is to exchange information on, and share practical experiences among experts from various countries in different regions of the world in the development and implementation of laws, regulations and other measures for conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and coastal areas and their resources, at the national, regional and global levels, focusing on certain emerging issues of international concern. The provisional programme of the seminar is attached.

Through interactive discussions among participants, it is aimed at identifying progresses made, challenges encountered, and opportunities in addressing the relevant issues, which might provide a factual basis for future consideration of ways and means to enhance legal and other measures to promote environmental sustainability of oceans and seas, and achieving sustainable development.

Request for participation and other queries concerning this seminar should be directed by email to: [montevideo@unep.org](mailto:montevideo@unep.org), with copy to [masa.nagai@unep.org](mailto:masa.nagai@unep.org) and [andrea.brusco@unep.org](mailto:andrea.brusco@unep.org).

This is one of the seminars organized in the process of the midterm review of the Montevideo Programme IV, and its outcome will contribute to the midterm review to be undertaken by an open-ended meeting of senior government officials scheduled for September 2015. The outcome of the above-mentioned midterm review will be reported to the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP at its second session to be held in May 2016.