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Conventions and Action Plans  
Incheon, the Republic of Korea  
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**Compilation of the resolutions of the Second Session of the  
United Nations Environment Assembly, which are relevant to  
the Regional Seas programmes**

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**United Nations Environment Assembly of the  
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**2/4. Role, functions and modalities for United Nations  
Environment Programme implementation of the SAMOA  
Pathway as a means of facilitating achievement of the  
Sustainable Development Goals**

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Reaffirming* General Assembly resolution 70/202 of 1 December 2015, which reaffirmed the Declaration of Barbados<sup>1</sup> and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,<sup>2</sup> the Mauritius Declaration<sup>3</sup> and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,<sup>4</sup> the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway<sup>5</sup> and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),<sup>6</sup> including chapter VII, on the sustainable development of small island developing States,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012 on the outcome document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want,” in which the General Assembly, among other things, called for the convening in 2014 of a third international conference on small island developing States,

*Taking into account* that Member States called for the strengthening of the United Nations system to support small island developing States in keeping with the multiple ongoing and emerging challenges faced by those States in achieving sustainable development,<sup>7</sup>

*Reaffirming* General Assembly resolution 69/15 of 14 November 2014, in which the General Assembly endorsed the SAMOA Pathway, adopted at the third International Conference on Small

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, annex II.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10–14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, annex II.

<sup>5</sup> Resolution 69/15, annex.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

<sup>7</sup> “The future we want”, para. 179.

Island Developing States, which inter alia reaffirms that “small island developing States remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities and that they remain constrained in meeting their goals in all three dimensions of sustainable development” and recognizes “the ownership and leadership of small island developing States in overcoming some of these challenges”, while stressing that, “in the absence of international cooperation, success will remain difficult”,

*Recalling* the outcome document of the ministerial segment of the first United Nations Environment Assembly for the institutional strengthening of the United Nations Environment Programme,

*Recalling also* General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 adopting the outcome document of the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,

1. *Expresses* its gratitude to the Government and the people of Samoa for hosting the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014 and for providing all necessary support;

2. *Acknowledges* the implementation of Governing Council decision 27/2 on the strengthening of the regional presence of the United Nations Environment Programme through the establishment of new Programme subregional offices for the Caribbean and for the Pacific, and encourages further efforts in that respect;

3. *Encourages* Member States to support, both actively and effectively, the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, particularly through partnerships in North-South, triangular and South-South cooperation on issues of importance to small island developing States such as financing, trade, technology transfer, capacity-building and institutional support;

4. *Also encourages* the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate, to contribute as appropriate to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, and requests the Executive Director:

(a) To incorporate into the medium-term strategy and its ongoing programme of work, and clearly identify, actions that assist small island developing States in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, with an emphasis on partnerships, technology transfer, capacity-building, institutional support, monitoring, reporting and evaluation;

(b) To enhance the provision of strategic and targeted support in areas covered by the environmental dimension of the SAMOA Pathway, including, inter alia, sustainable tourism;

(c) To facilitate learning, exchange of information, and North-South and South-South cooperation between small island developing States, regions and other developing countries, particularly with regard to how they have adapted and implemented approaches such as sustainable consumption and production patterns and resource efficiency;

(d) To build national and subregional capacity for reporting against the SAMOA Pathway and the Sustainable Development Goals, linking it to United Nations Environment Programme international environmental reporting platforms such as UNEP-Live and utilizing the Programme Indicator Reporting Information System for reporting under multilateral environmental agreements and the Sustainable Development Goals;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director to support small island developing States in actions to implement the SAMOA Pathway that will also contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

6. *Recognizes* that it and its subsidiary bodies can serve as an important forum for facilitating, and sharing information on, the implementation of the environmental dimension of the SAMOA Pathway by highlighting areas that need more action and directing attention and resources towards them as well as contributing to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to it on progress in the implementation of the present resolution, with an emphasis on programme activity outputs and impacts.

*6th plenary meeting  
27 May 2016*



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## **2/10. Oceans and seas**

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Recognizing* that the marine environment, including the oceans, seas and adjacent coastal areas, forms an integrated whole that is an essential component of the global life-support system and an asset presenting important opportunities for sustainable development,

*Gravely concerned* about threats to the health of our oceans, coastal areas, wetlands and islands, as reflected, inter alia, in the first global integrated marine assessment (World Ocean Assessment I) of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, acknowledged in United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/235, the fourth *Global Biodiversity Outlook* report<sup>1</sup> and chapter 30 of the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,<sup>2</sup> and about their probable increase in the foreseeable future,

*Recalling* that General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 calls for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of “The future we want”,

*Recalling also* the adoption by the General Assembly of 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, while recognizing also the connections between healthy and productive oceans and other Sustainable Development Goals,

*Recalling further* General Assembly resolution 70/226 of 22 December 2015, entitled “United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”, and welcoming in particular the decision therein to convene the high-level conference in Fiji in June 2017,

*Recognizing* the contribution in accordance with international law of the regional seas conventions, regional action plans and regional fisheries management organizations to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other relevant related Sustainable Development Goals at the regional level, as well as to regional follow-up and review, including through the regional monitoring and reporting mechanisms to be developed for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda,

<sup>1</sup> Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, *Global Biodiversity Outlook 4: A Mid-Term Assessment of Progress towards the Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020*, Montreal, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. Working Group II Contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, New York, Cambridge University Press.

*Recognizing also* the important contribution of many multilateral environmental agreements to delivering on the oceans-related Sustainable Development Goals and contributing to their follow-up and review processes,

*Recalling* that the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, reaffirmed the commitment contained in Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 on area-based conservation measures, including marine protected areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information as a tool for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components,<sup>3</sup> and that target 14.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals calls for the conservation, by 2020, of at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas,

*Recalling also* the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and noting with concern the assessment in the fourth *Global Biodiversity Outlook* report, that, while there is significant progress towards meeting some components of the majority of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the rate of progress in most cases will not be sufficient to achieve the targets by 2020 unless additional action is taken,

*Recalling further* Governing Council decision 27/6 on oceans, which urged countries to take the necessary steps to implement relevant and existing commitments, as well as commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to protect and restore the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, maintain biodiversity, and effectively apply an ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach in their management, in accordance with international law, of activities having an impact on the marine environment, in order to deliver on all three dimensions of sustainable development,

*Acknowledging* the United Nations Environment Programme contribution to tackling emerging issues and activities adding to pressure on the marine environment, and to increasing knowledge on issues such as marine litter, ocean acidification, hypoxia, and marine and coastal carbon sinks and reservoirs,

*Recognizing* the contribution of area-based management measures for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components under international instruments, such as particularly sensitive sea areas established by the International Maritime Organization, vulnerable marine ecosystems identified by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the work on marine protected areas under the regional seas conventions and action plans and other area-based management measures taken by regional fisheries management organizations, to reaching the target of Sustainable Development Goal 14 to, by 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas consistent with national and international law and based on best available scientific information, and acknowledging related scientific and technical work on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other global initiatives,

*Welcoming* the Paris Agreement adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as a crucial step towards limiting the climate-change-related impacts of warming and acidification of the oceans and of sea level rise and reducing the adverse consequences for marine and coastal ecosystems and coastal residents worldwide, including for small island developing States and other vulnerable States,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 69/292 of 19 June 2015 on the development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction,

*Taking into account* the contribution which the United Nations Environment Programme can make, upon request by the concerned States, to assist them in the protection and preservation of the marine environment, including in helping to achieve their objectives under relevant international law,

*Acknowledging* the challenges involved in enhancing cooperation and coordination among international organizations and forums relevant to marine issues, and highlighting the value of the cooperation and coordination of the United Nations Environment Programme with these organizations and forums to contribute to coherent delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

*Recalling* the three priority source categories for work (nutrients, marine litter and waste water) under the 2012 Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities,

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<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, para. 177.

*Noting* the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017–2020 adopted at the seventeenth Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans,

1. *Requests* the Executive Director to include oceans-related aspects of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets in United Nations Environment Programme activities, in cooperation and coordination with relevant global and regional forums, agreements and organizations, consistent with international law, and to report on that work to the Environment Assembly at its next session;

2. *Calls* for continued cooperation and coordination on marine issues among all relevant global and regional forums and organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Maritime Organization, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the International Seabed Authority, the International Whaling Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme, in order to deliver coherently on Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its interrelated targets;

3. *Invites* the Executive Director to provide the necessary input for the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and Sustainably Use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development, to be organized in June 2017, as appropriate;

4. *Calls on* Member States that have not yet done so to consider acceding to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, to promote its rapid entry into force;

5. *Invites* Member States and regional seas conventions and action plans, in cooperation, as appropriate, with other relevant organizations and forums, such as regional fisheries management organizations, to work towards the implementation of, and reporting on, the different ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Environment Programme to step up its work, including through its Regional Seas Programme, on assisting countries and regions in the application of the ecosystem approach to managing the marine and coastal environment, including through enabling intersectoral cooperation in integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning;

7. *Also requests* the United Nations Environment Programme to provide, upon request by the Member States, technical advice on the designation, establishment and active management of marine protected areas and on the application of other spatial management measures in cooperation with competent international and regional forums and organizations, including, as appropriate, multilateral environmental agreements and regional fisheries bodies;

8. *Encourages* Member States, individually and jointly and also within regional bodies, to designate and actively manage marine protected areas and take other effective area-based conservation measures, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information, with a view to achieving the related global targets, in particular where significantly less than 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas are so far being conserved, or where protected areas lack effective and equitable management, connectedness or ecological representativeness;

9. *Also encourages* the United Nations Environment Programme to continue to participate in the process initiated by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/292 on the development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;

10. *Notes* the document on the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017–2020 and requests the Executive Director to communicate the Strategic Directions to conferences of the parties, intergovernmental meetings or other governing bodies of the relevant regional seas conventions and action plans;

11. *Requests* the Executive Director, through the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Seas Programme, to reinforce cooperation, coordination, communication and sharing of best practices and information among the existing regional seas conventions and action plans across different geographical areas, in line with the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017–2020;

12. *Invites* Member States that have not done so to consider becoming parties to and/or members of regional seas conventions and action plans, and encourages the United Nations Environment Programme, through its Regional Seas Programme, to support initiatives by such Member States in that regard;
13. *Encourages* the contracting parties to existing regional seas conventions to consider the possibility of increasing the regional coverage of those instruments in accordance with international law;
14. *Acknowledges* and expresses support for the strategic partnership between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization in the context of the 2030 Agenda, particularly for the implementation of the Sustainable Food Systems Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns;
15. *Supports* the United Nations Environment Programme contribution to marine ecosystem restoration activities, and in particular to ecosystem management and restoration in coastal regions, nature-based solutions to climate adaptation and the creation of sustainable jobs and livelihoods in coastal regions, including through multi-stakeholder partnerships;
16. *Encourages* the United Nations Environment Programme to provide scientific support, in cooperation with relevant organizations, programmes and forums, to increase understanding of – and thus help in avoiding – abrupt, accelerating or irreversible environmental changes with potentially significant global consequences – for example, thawing of the permafrost of the seabed and melting of sea ice and glaciers;
17. *Requests* the Executive Director to assess the effectiveness of the United Nations Environment Programme 2011 marine and coastal strategy and, on the basis of that assessment, submit a proposal for its updating, revision or replacement, for consideration by the Environment Assembly at its next session.

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## **2/11. Marine plastic litter and microplastics**

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Recalling* the concern reflected in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, that the oceans and marine biodiversity are negatively affected by marine pollution, including marine litter – especially plastic – persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals and nitrogen-based compounds, from numerous marine and land-based sources, and the commitment to reduce such pollution,

*Recalling also* the Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, which highlighted the relevance of the Honolulu Strategy and the Honolulu Commitment for the prevention and management of marine debris and called for the establishment of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, which was subsequently launched at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and hosted by the Global Programme of Action,

*Noting* the increased knowledge regarding the levels, sources, negative effects of and possible measures to reduce marine plastic debris and microplastics in the marine environment, as summarized in, among other sources, the 2016 study “Marine plastic debris and microplastics: global lessons and research to inspire action and guide policy change”, on marine plastic debris and microplastics, the preparation of which was mandated by the Environment Assembly in its resolution 1/6,

*Noting also* that the report of the First World Ocean Assessment points to the emerging issue of the smallest microplastic particles, which are nano-sized, and expresses concern about the ability of microplastics to enter marine food chains and the potential risk for the environment and human health,

*Noting with concern* that plastic and microplastics may be transported through freshwater systems such as rivers and are found in all compartments of the marine environment; that their input is rapidly increasing; that the plastics in the marine environment degrade extremely slowly; that the plastics contain and can adsorb and emit chemicals, such as persistent organic pollutants, and can contribute to their distribution and the spread of harmful organisms; and that all this has negative effects on marine life, ecosystems and ecosystem services, including fisheries, maritime transport, recreation and tourism as well as local societies and economies,

*Reaffirming* General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, by which the General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recalling Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its target 14.1, which seeks, by 2025, to “prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution”, and recognizing the importance of other relevant Sustainable Development Goal targets, as well as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, for effective implementation,

*Noting* that the General Assembly in its resolution 70/235 of 23 December 2015, on oceans and the law of the sea, expressed concern regarding the negative effects of marine debris and microplastics and urged States to take action,

*Recognizing* the importance of cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and conventions and international instruments related to preventing and minimizing marine pollution from waste, including marine plastic litter, microplastics and associated chemicals and their adverse effects on human health and the environment, such as the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management,

1. *Recognizes* that the presence of plastic litter and microplastics<sup>1</sup> in the marine environment is a rapidly increasing serious issue of global concern that needs an urgent global response taking into account a product life-cycle approach, and acknowledging that the levels and sources of marine plastic litter and microplastics, and the resources available to tackle the issue, can vary between regions, and that measures need to be taken and adapted as appropriate to local, national and regional situations;

2. *Recalls* its resolution 1/6, “Marine plastic debris and microplastics”, and urges all States that have not yet done so to implement fully all its relevant recommendations and decisions, including through national measures and regional, international and cross-sectoral cooperation;

3. *Welcomes* the activities of the relevant United Nations bodies and organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Maritime Organization, which act in coordination with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection and the Global Partnership on Marine Litter to prevent and reduce marine litter and microplastics; encourages the active contribution of all stakeholders to their work; and acknowledges the importance of cooperation and information sharing between the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Maritime Organization, as well as the cooperation under the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, on this matter;

4. *Acknowledges* the regional action plans on marine litter under the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region; welcomes the ongoing development of such plans for the Black Sea, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Kuwait Regional Convention for Cooperation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution; welcomes the Group of Seven<sup>2</sup> action plan to combat marine litter; and urges other Governments and regions to collaborate to establish such action plans where relevant;

5. *Welcomes* the work under the aegis of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Whaling Commission and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals on impacts of marine debris on marine biological diversity, and under the aegis of the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region on pollution from vessels and from land-based sources, and calls for the coordination of that work with other relevant work in the framework of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter;

6. *Also welcomes* the report<sup>3</sup> of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme on the implementation of the Assembly’s resolution 1/6 on marine plastic debris and microplastics, takes note of the Executive Director’s recommendations, and urges that they be evaluated, and possibly implemented as relevant and appropriate, including through strengthened national, regional and international measures, cooperation and action plans, prioritizing important sources and impacts and cost-effective measures, cooperation with industry, civil society and other stakeholders to reduce the input, level and impact of plastic debris and microplastics in the oceans;

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<sup>1</sup> Plastic particles less than 5 millimetres in diameter, including nano-sized particles.

<sup>2</sup> Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

<sup>3</sup> UNEP/EA.2/5.

7. *Stresses* that prevention and environmentally sound management of waste are keys to long-term success in combating marine pollution, including marine plastic debris and microplastics, calls on Member States to establish and implement necessary policies, regulatory frameworks and measures consistent with the waste hierarchy, and in this context stresses the importance of providing capacity-building and that Member States should consider financial assistance to developing countries, least developed countries and in particular small island developing States for the realization of these objectives;

8. *Welcomes* the United Nations Environment Programme massive open online course on marine litter; the United Nations World Ocean Day 2016 with the theme “Healthy Oceans, Healthy Planet”; and the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, which in 2016 will focus on marine debris, plastics and microplastics, and notes, in this regard, the report of the Secretary-General prepared for the meeting;<sup>4</sup>

9. *Recognizes* that surface runoff, rivers and sewage outfalls are important pathways for litter transfer from land to the sea; also recognizes the need for measures to combat the littering of freshwater courses, including measures to adapt to extreme storms, flooding and other relevant effects of climate change; and encourages international cooperation on transboundary watercourses in that regard, where relevant;

10. *Also recognizes* that education, capacity-building, knowledge transfer and awareness-raising regarding sources and negative effects of and measures to reduce and prevent marine plastic debris and microplastics, as well as environmentally sound waste management systems and clean-up actions, are crucial;

11. *Requests* the Executive Director, within available resources, to assist Member States, especially developing countries, with emphasis on small island developing States and least developed countries, upon their request, in the development and implementation of national or regional measures and action plans; invites those in a position to do so to support such action; and recognizes that targeted measures in regions that are the largest sources of marine litter are especially important for the global reduction of marine plastic debris and microplastics;

12. *Recognizes* the need to identify transport and distribution pathways and hotspots of marine litter, to cooperate regionally and internationally to clean up such hotspots where appropriate, and to develop environmentally sound systems and methods for removal and sound disposal of marine litter; stresses that removal is urgent in areas where it poses an immediate threat to sensitive marine and coastal ecosystems or marine-based livelihoods or local societies; and recognizes that removal actions should, as far as possible, be risk-based and cost-effective, following best available techniques and environmental practices and the polluter pays approach;

13. *Encourages* Governments at all levels to further develop partnerships with industry and civil society and establish public-private partnerships, including with regard to environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic packaging and deposit refund systems; to raise awareness of the sources and negative effects of and possible measures for reducing marine plastic debris and microplastics; to promote change in individual and corporate behaviour; and to cooperate in the prevention and clean-up of marine plastic debris; and, in that regard, invites initiatives for the development of sustainable tourism, including through the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns;

14. *Recognizes* the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and regional fisheries bodies and management organizations to mitigate and clean up abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear, and encourages Member States and Governments at all levels to include such measures in national and regional action plans to combat marine litter, as relevant, noting that cost-effective technologies and practices are available;

15. *Underlines* the need for the sharing of knowledge and experience on the best available techniques and environmental practices for reducing littering from the fishing industry and aquaculture, and for implementation of pilot projects where appropriate, including in respect of deposit schemes, voluntary agreements and recovery, in particular through prevention and, reduction, reuse and recycling (the “three Rs”);

16. *Recognizes* the role of the International Maritime Organization in mitigating marine litter; recalls annex V of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships; and agrees on the need to reduce illegal dumping of litter in the sea, including through the establishment and use of effective port reception facilities, the identification and, as appropriate, recovery of costs

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<sup>4</sup> A/71/74.

related to the disposal of garbage and waste, including through harbour fees, and consideration of other incentives and innovative approaches;

17. *Acknowledges* the findings of the 2016 study of the United Nations Environment Programme on marine plastic debris and microplastics<sup>5</sup> on the most important global sources of and possible measures for avoiding microplastics entering the marine environment, and recognizes that Governments need to further identify the most significant sources, as well as important and cost-effective preventive measures at the national and regional levels; invites Governments to undertake such prioritized measures nationally and through regional and international cooperation and in cooperation with industry, as appropriate, and to share their experiences; and urges the phasing out of the use of primary microplastic particles in products, including, wherever possible, products such as personal care products, industrial abrasives and printing products, and their replacement with organic or mineral non-hazardous compounds;

18. *Encourages* product manufacturers and others to consider the life cycle environmental impacts of products containing microbeads and compostable polymers, including possible downstream impacts that may compromise the recycling of plastic waste; to eliminate or reduce the use of primary microplastic particles in products, including, wherever possible, products such as personal care products, industrial abrasives and printing products; to ensure that any replacement products are environmentally sound; and to cooperate in the environmentally sound management of such plastic waste;

19. *Also encourages* the establishment of harmonized international definitions and terminology concerning the size of, and compatible standards and methods for the monitoring and assessment of, marine plastic debris and microplastics, as well as the establishment of and cooperation on cost-effective monitoring, building as far as possible on ongoing related monitoring programmes and considering alternative automated and remote sensing technology where possible and relevant;

20. *Underlines* that, while research already undertaken provides sufficient evidence of the need for immediate action, more research is needed on marine plastic debris and microplastics, including associated chemicals, and especially on environmental and social impacts – including on human health – and on pathways, fluxes and fate, including fragmentation and degradation rates, in all marine compartments and especially in water bodies and sediment deposits of the coastal and open ocean, as well as on impacts on fisheries, aquaculture and economy; and urges Governments at all levels and Member States in a position to do so to support such research;

21. *Requests* the Executive Director, in close cooperation with other relevant bodies and organizations, to undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of relevant international, regional and subregional governance strategies and approaches to combat marine plastic litter and microplastics, taking into consideration the relevant international, regional and subregional regulatory frameworks and identifying possible gaps and options for addressing them, including through regional cooperation and coordination, and to present the assessment to the Environment Assembly at its next session, within available resources for this purpose;

22. *Invites* States, in cooperation with industry and other stakeholders, at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, to organize and/or participate in annual campaigns for awareness-raising, prevention and environmentally sound clean-up of marine litter, including in coastal areas and oceans, to support and supplement the civil-society-driven beach clean-up days;

23. *Invites* those in a position to do so to provide financial and other support for follow-up to the present resolution;

24. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to the Environment Assembly at its third session on progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

6th plenary meeting  
27 May 2016

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<sup>5</sup> *Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics: Global Lessons and Research to Inspire Action and Guide Policy Change*, UNEP, 2016.



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## **2/12. Sustainable coral reefs management**

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Noting* that the General Assembly in its resolution 65/150 of 20 December 2010, entitled “Protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development”, urged States, within their national jurisdictions, and the competent international organizations, within their mandates, given the imperative for action, to take all practical steps at all levels to protect coral reefs and related ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods and development, including immediate and concerted global, regional and local action to respond to the challenges and to address the adverse impact of climate change, including through mitigation and adaptation, as well as of ocean acidification, on coral reefs and related ecosystems,

*Noting also* the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, which states, “We also recognize the significant economic, social and environmental contributions of coral reefs, in particular to islands and other coastal States, as well as the significant vulnerability of coral reefs and mangroves to impacts, including from climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, destructive fishing practices and pollution. We support international cooperation with a view to conserving coral reef and mangrove ecosystems and realizing their social, economic and environmental benefits as well as facilitating technical collaboration and voluntary information-sharing”,<sup>1</sup>

*Considering* the World Food Summit Plan of Action adopted in Rome in 1996, as well as the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security identified in the Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security of 2009,

*Considering also* Aichi Biodiversity Target 10, which aims to minimize the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification so as to maintain their integrity and functioning, and deeply concerned that the 2015 deadline has not been met,

*Bearing in mind* the outcome document of the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in particular paragraph 14, which, inter alia, acknowledges that increases in global temperatures, sea level rise, ocean acidification and other climate change impacts are seriously affecting coastal areas and low-lying coastal countries, including many least developed countries and small island developing States, and also bearing in mind Sustainable Development Goal 14,

<sup>1</sup> Endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012.

*Recalling* that General Assembly resolution 65/150 reaffirms that the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides the overall legal framework for ocean activities, and emphasizes its fundamental character, conscious that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach,

*Acknowledging* the Manado Ocean Declaration, adopted by the World Ocean Conference on 14 May 2009, and the Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity of 1995, as well as decision XII/23 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,

*Recognizing* the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities as well as the International Coral Reef Initiative Continuing Call to Action and Framework for Action 2013, which provide a meaningful basis for advancing ocean issues, as well as other international and/or regional entities related to the management of ocean and marine biodiversity,

*Recalling* the International Coral Reef Initiative resolution adopted in October 2014 on promoting an integrated approach to community-based coral reef conservation and management emphasizing land-sea connectivity,

*Noting* the Manado Communiqué, adopted at the World Coral Reefs Conference on 16 May 2014, which recognized the importance of continued cooperation among Governments and the United Nations Environment Programme as well as with other international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and communities towards the sustainable management of coral reefs, and that such cooperation may be advanced by countries through the United Nations Environment Assembly,

*Recognizing* that, as is stated in General Assembly resolution 65/150,<sup>2</sup> millions of the world's inhabitants depend on the health of coral reefs and related ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods and development, as they are a primary source of food and income, add to the aesthetic and cultural dimensions of communities and also provide protection from storms, tsunamis and coastal erosion,

*Welcoming* regional cooperation and initiatives, including the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security, the Micronesia Challenge, the Caribbean Challenge Initiative, the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape Project, the Western Indian Ocean Partnership, the West African Conservation Challenge and the Regional Initiative for the Conservation and Wise Use of Mangroves and Coral Reefs in the Americas,

1. *Calls* for national, regional and international initiatives, cooperation and commitments to conserve and sustainably manage coral reefs, including cold-water coral ecosystems, and mangrove forests, which contribute to food security and nutrition for peoples' livelihoods;
2. *Stresses* the need to develop environmentally sustainable economic opportunities and inclusive sustainable growth to improve the livelihoods of the local community-level beneficiaries of coral reefs;
3. *Recognizes* that education, capacity-building and knowledge transfer with regard to the importance of coral reefs and related ecosystems, including cold-water coral ecosystems and mangrove forests, the threats to these ecosystems and recommended measures to ensure their protection and sustainable use, are crucial, and invites Governments in a position to do so to support such action;
4. *Encourages* Governments to further develop partnerships with industry, including fisheries, aquaculture and tourism, and civil society, and the establishment of public-private partnerships to raise awareness of the importance of coral reefs and related ecosystems, including cold-water coral ecosystems and mangrove forests, the threats to these ecosystems and recommended measures to ensure their protection and sustainable use; encourages Governments to cooperate in the protection and sustainable management of these ecosystems; and in this regard invites initiatives for the development of sustainable tourism, including through the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production;
5. *Also encourages* Governments to formulate, adopt and implement integrated, ecosystem-based and comprehensive approaches for the sustainable management of coral reefs, cold-water coral ecosystems, mangrove forests and related ecosystems;

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<sup>2</sup> Preambular para. 10.

6. *Calls*, in this context, on countries to undertake the priority actions to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 on coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems;
7. *Encourages* Governments to prioritize coral reef conservation and sustainable management, including through the establishment and active management of marine protected areas, as well as through other spatial and relevant sectoral approaches, consistent with national and international law and based on best available scientific information, with a view to enhancing climate change resilience and securing continued coral reef ecosystem services provision;
8. *Invites* Governments and donors to provide technical and financial support for the conservation and management of coral reefs, including in developing countries;
9. *Recognizes* the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs and affirms the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policymaking and implementation for the conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs;
10. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular through the Coral Reef Unit and in cooperation with other relevant international organizations and initiatives, within the programme of work and available resources, to contribute to raising awareness through public outreach campaigns as well as the Global Environment Outlook assessment processes of the importance of the sustainable management of coral reefs and related ecosystems, including cold-water coral ecosystems;
11. *Also requests* the Executive Director, within available resources and in cooperation with Governments and stakeholders in a position to do so, to strengthen capacity-building, knowledge transfer and the development of relevant planning tools to avoid, minimize and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and human-based threats on coral reefs and related ecosystems, as well as to support the improvement and maintaining of the resilience of coral reefs and related ecosystems;
12. *Further requests* the Executive Director, in particular through the Coral Reef Unit and in cooperation with other relevant international organizations, forums and initiatives, to, within available resources, assist Governments, including those of small island developing States, least developed countries and other developing coastal States, upon their request, in the development and implementation of national and regional measures and action plans in this regard;
13. *Requests* the Executive Director, in cooperation with the International Coral Reef Initiative, other relevant international organizations and other relevant partners to prepare, by 2018, an analysis of global and regional policy instruments and governance mechanisms related to the protection and sustainable management of coral reefs;
14. *Also requests* the Executive Director to support the further development of coral reef indicators and regional coral reef assessments as well as the preparation of a global report on coral reef status and trends through the International Coral Reef Initiative Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, in collaboration with existing regional initiatives, and taking into consideration ongoing regional and global assessments;
15. *Further requests* the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session on progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

*6th plenary meeting  
27 May 2016*



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

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment Programme**  
**Second session**  
Nairobi, 23–27 May 2016

**2/18. Relationship between the United Nations Environment  
Programme and the multilateral environmental  
agreements for which it provides the secretariats**

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Recalling* Governing Council decisions 26/9, SS.XII/1, SS.XII/3 and 27/13 as well as its own resolution 1/12, in which the Executive Director was requested to produce reports on the relationship between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariats,

*Acknowledging* that since the United Nations Environment Programme and each of the multilateral environmental agreements have their own legally independent governance structures, decision-making bodies and procedures, it is beneficial for Governments to ensure that their policymaking on, and implementation of, relevant resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly and decisions of multilateral environmental agreements are mutually supportive,

*Noting* that specific provisions contained in each multilateral environmental agreement stipulate the key functions, prerogatives and responsibilities of the relevant governing bodies and secretariats for the operationalization of the agreements,

*Noting also* that when the governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements decide to request that the Executive Director provide their secretariats, they accept that the multilateral environmental agreements' secretariats will become subject to the administrative and financial regulations and rules of the United Nations as applied to the United Nations Environment Programme and as supplemented by the multilateral environmental agreements' own financial rules,

*Recalling* that when the Executive Director has been entrusted with providing the secretariat for a multilateral environmental agreement, the Executive Director also requires the approval of the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme to establish appropriate arrangements for carrying out secretariat functions and to establish or extend the trust funds of that multilateral environmental agreement,

*Noting with appreciation* that the United Nations Environment Programme currently provides or will provide the secretariat for numerous multilateral environmental agreements, listed in the annex to the present resolution (hereinafter referred to as the "UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements"),

*Recalling* its resolution 1/16, which notes that agreements for which the United Nations Environment Programme carries out the functions of the secretariat must be based on the principle of cost recovery when it comes to administrative costs, in line with the financial regulations and rules of the United Nations,

*Noting* the Executive Director's report on the relationship between the United Nations Environment Programme and the UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements<sup>1</sup> and the work of the task team, which was based on close cooperation between the UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements and the United Nations Environment Programme in preparing its recommendations,

*Welcoming* the steps taken by the Executive Director to improve the effectiveness of administrative arrangements, delivery of service, and the mutual supportiveness of programmes of work between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides a secretariat, including taking steps to implement the recommendations of the task team,

## **A**

### **Institutional framework and accountability**

1. *Requests* the Executive Director, in consultation with the secretariats of the UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements, to develop a flexible draft template of options for the provision of secretariat services in an appropriate form, such as a memorandum of understanding between the Executive Director and the conferences of the parties or other relevant governing bodies of the UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements, for their consideration;

2. *Encourages* the Executive Director, in establishing the delegations of authority to the heads of the multilateral environment agreement secretariats, to maintain the flexibility required on a case-by-case basis, including to reflect the size of the multilateral environmental agreement secretariats;

## **B**

### **Administrative and financial framework**

3. *Invites* the governing bodies of the UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements to bring to the attention of the Executive Director any administrative or financial challenges they face as a result of the practical implementation of their memorandums of understanding;

4. *Also invites* the governing bodies of the UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements to share among themselves good practices in respect of their budget and human resources management;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Environment Programme to waive programme support costs on voluntary contributions for participation costs when arranging participation is done by administrative staff financed by the programme support costs on the operating budget;

6. *Requests* the Executive Director to prepare information for the governing bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements on the implications of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards for their operational budgets;

## **C**

### **Mutual supportiveness of programmes of work**

7. *Requests* the Executive Director, when invited to do so by the governing bodies of the UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements, to foster mutually supportive programmes of work between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and make available relevant scientific information important to their work;

## **D**

### **Future steps**

8. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue his efforts in these matters in an open and transparent manner, and to report on progress made to the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme.

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP/E.A.2/11.

## **Annex**

### **List of multilateral environmental agreements for which the United Nations Environment Programme currently provides the secretariat or where decisions to that effect are in place**

#### **Agreements for which the United Nations Environment Programme currently provides the secretariat**

1. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
2. Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and its associated agreements
3. Convention on Biological Diversity and its protocols
4. Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer
5. Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
6. Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa
7. Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade
8. Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
9. Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its protocols
10. Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) and its protocols
11. Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean (Nairobi Convention) and its protocols
12. Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention) and its protocols
13. Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians

#### **Agreements for which the United Nations Environment Programme currently provides the interim secretariat and the United Nations Environment Assembly has accepted that it should provide the permanent secretariat**

14. Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention)

#### **Agreements that specify that the United Nations Environment Programme should provide the secretariat upon entry into force**

15. Minamata Convention on Mercury

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