

Meeting Report on the Third Meeting of the Regional Seas Indicators Working Group

Background

1. In 2014, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organised the Technical Workshop on Selecting Indicators for the State of Regional Seas from 30 June to 2 July 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland. In this workshop, the participants recommended to establish a Regional Seas Indicators Working Group.
2. Based on the recommendation, the First Meeting of the Regional Seas Indicators Working Group was organised on 23 October 2015 in Istanbul, Turkey. At the meeting, the Regional Seas indicator set was adopted¹. Subsequently, UNEP requested Regional Seas Convention and Action Plans to provide further information on the indicators including monitoring methods, data coverages, and data sources. Using the responses provided on the indicators, UNEP compiled information on the Regional Seas Indicator 1 on Chlrophyll-a and Indicator 3 on Marine Litter.
3. The second meeting of the Regional Seas Indicators Working Group was held on 15 March 2016 in order to review the progress of the compilation work by UNEP and to discuss possible way forward as the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are finalized through the 47th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). During the meeting, the Working Group members agreed that that Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans would continue working on the Regional Seas indicators, while start analysing the way to align them with the SDG indicators. As was agreed in the work plan², the members were invited to nominate its Chair and Ms. Virginie Hart, UNEP/MAP, was elected after the meeting.
4. The third meeting of the Regional Seas Indicators Working Group was organised on 6 July 2016 at 8:00 am and 5:00 pm to review the progress of the SDG indicators and the compilation work on Regional Seas indicators especially on Indicator 22 on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). The meeting agenda is appended as **Annex 1** and the list of participants is attached as **Annex 2**. The meeting documents were circulated prior to the meeting. All the documents are uploaded at the meeting website³. Both sessions were conducted in English.

Morning Session

5. Mr. Takehiro Nakamura, UNEP, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He provided a brief overview on the process of Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs). The third meeting of the IAEG-SDGs⁴ was held from 30 March to 1 April 2016 in Mexico City, Mexico. The IAEG-SDGs has implemented a classification system, which categorises the SDG indicators into Tier 1,

¹ UNEP/EARS/WG.2/5 (Annex 4)

² UNEP/EARS/WG.2/5 (Annex 5)

³<http://www.unep.org/ecosystemmanagement/water/regionalseas40/Meetings/3rdRSIndicatorsWorkingGroup/ta/bid/1061536/Default.aspx>

⁴ <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-03>

2 and 3⁵. The classification is based on the level of conceptual and methodological development and Tier 3 means that methodology has to be further developed. For each SDG indicator, a custodian international organisation has been assigned. In terms of SDG14, UNEP was assigned as the custodian agency for 14.1 (supported by UNESCO-IOC), 14.2 (supported by UNESCO-IOC), 14.3 and 14.5 (UNEP-WCMC supported by IUCN). UNEP has been promoting the indicators that are already used by the Regional Seas programmes and the Regional Seas indicators have been recognised by the IAEG-SDGs. Metadata on each SDG indicators have been collected by the UN Statistical Division, the overall custodian of the SDG indicators.

6. Referring to the SDG 14.1, Ms. Alice Newton commented that inter-calibration of different methodologies for measuring chlorophyll-a has been studied as was reported to the Second Working Group meeting. She will share the synopsis of the report once finalised. She further provided an explanation on the Nested Environmental Assessment Tool⁶, which was developed under the DEVOTES project. This software has been tested on the four European Regional Seas and could also be useful for other Regional Seas programmes. A webinar on this topic could be organised if there is an interest from the Regional Seas.
7. Mr. Nakamura continued by describing the progress of the information compilation on the Regional Seas indicators. He reminded the participants that developing a common set of Regional Seas Indicators does not mean that Regional Seas should have harmonised indicators. The intention is to develop a mutually supportive framework on indicators. Some of the well-developed indicators used in other regions may be applied to other regions and this may allow inter-regional comparison. In addition, by aligning the Regional Seas indicators with the SDG indicators, Regional Seas could contribute to monitoring on the SDGs in a coordinated manner.
8. Mr. Nakamura stated that the information on the indicator 22 *“National ICZM guidelines and enabling legislation are adopted”* was summarised and was circulated to the Working Group. This indicator is in line with the SDG Target 14.2. On this SDG indicator, Mr. Alexander Tkalin, NOWPAP, questioned how it would be possible to measure the percentage of area managed sustainably. Mr. Nakamura explained that Member States did not want to adopt “number of countries” as an indicator and decided on this indicator. Regarding the indicator in the NOWPAP region, Mr. Tkalin indicated that three participating countries of NOWPAP (China, Korea and Japan) are reporting to PEMSEA on ICZM. PEMSEA has a regional target of 25% of area covered by ICM programme⁷. As there is an existing regional target, NOWPAP may also consider adopting this indicator within its

⁵ <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-03/Provisional-Proposed-Tiers-for-SDG-Indicators-24-03-16.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.devotes-project.eu>

⁷ *“By 2021, ICM programs for sustainable development of coastal and marine areas covering at least 25% of the region’s coastline and contiguous watershed areas, supporting national priorities and commitments under the UN SDGs, UNFCCC, Aichi Biodiversity Targets, UNISDR Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and other relevant environmental and sustainable development targets subscribed to by PEMSEA Partner Countries.”*

framework. Mr. Reynaldo Molina, COBSEA, stated that it is the same situation for COBSEA as some participating countries are also PEMSEA member states.

9. With regards to the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) National Action Plan, information has been collected by the GPA secretariat. However, it should be noted that there is no formal reporting mechanism to the GPA secretariat on the implementation of the National Action Plans. The participants repeated their concerns on the level of Member States' interests in GPA. Mr. Nakamura commented that this is an important issue that should be brought to the attention of the countries.
10. Mr. Nakamura described the intercessional work plan from the present meeting to the 18th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, to be held from 30 September to 1 October 2016 in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The 18th Global Meeting will address three main topics: (1) SDGs; (2) inputs to the next GPA Intergovernmental Review (IGR-4), to be held in Indonesia in 2017; and (3) implementation of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions (2017-2020). A draft paper on the Regional Seas' implementation of SDGs will be circulated to the Regional Seas colleagues for comments. By the 18th Global Meeting, UNEP should be able to finish compiling most of the information on the Regional Seas Indicators. Mr. Nakamura promised that he would follow up with the FAO colleagues with the five Regional Seas indicators related to the fisheries and aquaculture.
11. Ms. Kanako Hasegawa described the analysis conducted by the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) on SDGs vs CBD convention text and SDGs vs Aichi Targets. As an intercessional work, she proposed that UNEP prepare a similar table for the Regional Seas indicators mapped against the SDGs and Aichi Targets. In addition, she proposed that each Regional Seas secretariat map out Regional targets and indicators against SDGs. Mr. Nakamura stressed that the exercise is not for UNEP to compile the data. The proposed exercise is for each Regional Sea and the result of this exercise may be communicated with the respective participating countries, as appropriate.
12. Mr. Tkalin proposed that UNEP prepare a template for the proposed mapping exercise. He also suggested this to be done before the 18th Global Meeting. Appreciating this proposal, Mr. Nakamura added that this could be an important material to showcase the importance of the regional dimension for the implementation of SDGs at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, to be held in Fiji in 2017.
13. Referring to the SDGs in relation to the Marine Strategic Framework Directives of the European Commission, Ms. Newton pointed out the strict compliance mechanism for MSFD. While most of the Regional Seas Conventions do not have a compliance mechanism, MSFD can put a large amount of fine on non-compliant countries. This could motivate countries to prioritise work and reporting for MSFD. She also indicated that a study on the overlaps of compliance schemes required by different governance mechanisms could be useful. The DEVOTES project has prepared several scientific

papers on ocean governance which could be of interests to the Regional Seas. Ms. Newton promised to share the relevant papers with the Working Group.

Evening Session

14. Ms. Johanna Laurila, HELCOM, informed the participants on the process of mapping out HELCOM indicators against the SDG Targets and Indicators. The contracting parties will review this document by the end of August 2016. Ms. Laurila would share the document once it is reviewed by the contracting parties and the comments are incorporated.
15. Mr. Richard Dacosta, Abidjan Convention, briefed the participants on the recent development of the Abidjan Convention including the preparation of various protocols under the conventions including the ICZM protocol. He also mentioned that the Abidjan Convention is conducting a revision of its monitoring programme. As the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention has not provided information on its indicators, it is invited to provide information based on the questionnaire to the Working Group.
16. Ms. Irina Makarenko, Black Sea Commission, provided information on the development of its ICZM guideline. In cooperation with UNEP/MAP, the Black Seas Commission is in the process of preparing the guideline and it is expected to be adopted by the end of this year. She highlighted the Memorandum of Understanding between the Black Sea Commission and UNEP/MAP, which lists ICZM as one of the focused areas.
17. With regards to the GPA National Action Plan, Mr. Dixon Waruinge, Nairobi Convention, stated that the actual implementation status of National Action Plans is unknown. While separate global process is ongoing for the preparation of the IGR-4, it would be important for the Regional Sea programmes to engage in the process especially through the 18th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. Regarding the ICZM indicator, the Nairobi Convention has a reporting template. He pointed out that some countries consider ICZM policy as an instrument for the implementation of GPA even though it is not labelled as a GPA National Action Plan.
18. Referring to the GPA, Mr. Julian Reyna, CPPS, commented that the GPA website is not accessible. Ms. Hasegawa responded that the website has been moved to www.unep.org/gpa/ and it should be accessible from the address.
19. Mr. Reyna also asked whether the indicators will be addressed during the 18th Global Meeting in Korea. Mr. Nakamura assured that this topic is included in the agenda although we will not be able to allocate one day for the Regional Seas Indicators.
20. Referring to the data management on the indicators, Mr. Waruinge commented that a regional data platform would be useful the contracting parties to draw data from for the purpose of monitoring and reporting on the SDGs.

21. Responding to the suggestion, Mr. Nakamura proposed to have a discussion with the UNEP-Live team on potential data management scheme through the UNEP-Live platform inviting interested Regional Sea programmes.
22. Referring to the recent development on MSP, Ms. Laurila, stated that HELCOM proposed to construct its reporting for each country based on two elements: (1) whether the national legislation is in place (monitored through the country), and (2) whether the *“Guidelines on the application of Ecosystem Approach in transnationally coherent MSP”* are implemented (monitored through the online HELCOM Explorer⁸). The evaluation could be yes, no, and partly (if only legislation implemented and if guidelines are only partially implemented). Most countries in the Baltic Sea Region already have the legislation in place and HELCOM is looking into the quality and level of the implementation.
23. Based on the discussion during the morning session as well as the HELCOM’s process on mapping the HELCOM targets against the SDGs, Ms. Hasegawa proposed that UNEP provide a template for each Regional Seas to analyse Regional targets in relation to the SDGs.
24. Mr. Waruinge stated that it is important start mapping out how many SDG indicators are linked with the oceans and seas as the SDG 14 is not the only SDGs that are relevant to the work of Regional Seas.
25. Appreciating the comment, Mr. Nakamura responded that both the regional and global analyses are important. As different Regional Seas have different scope of work, it would be also useful for each Regional Seas to conduct an analysis for its region.
26. Ms. Makarenko added that this exercise could potentially be jointly conducted within the framework of the cooperation with UNEP/MAP.
27. Ms. Lorna Innis, Cartagena Convention, appreciated all the inputs and information shared by the participants. She highlighted that in her region the reporting to the Convention and its protocols is one of the major concerns. She commented that the reporting issue could be further discussed with and learned from the other regions.
28. Mr. Nakamura noted that reporting issue is a common problem across different Regional Seas and Multilateral Environmental Agreements and need further work.
29. To wrap up the meeting, Mr. Nakamura thanked all the participants for their contribution and apologised for the connection problems. As UNEP has a new policy of using *“Go-to Meeting”* for this

⁸ <http://maps.helcom.fi/website/HELCOMexplorer/index.html>

kind of conference calls, it was proposed to use the Go-to Meeting system for the next intercessional meeting of the Working Group.

Conclusion of the meeting

30. UNEP to prepare the compiled description of the Regional Seas Indicators before the 18th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.
31. Ms. Hasegawa to prepare and send a template for mapping out Regional Seas indicators / targets against the SDGs based on the CBD's analysis. Regional Seas secretariats are invited to conduct the same exercises before the 18th Global Meeting for further discussion at the meeting.
32. Ms. Hasegawa to circulate the draft paper on the Regional Seas implementation on the SDGs for comments by the Regional Seas colleagues. The paper will be submitted to the 18th Global Meeting.
33. Ms. Newton to share the synopsis report, information on NEAT and scientific papers on ocean governance with the Working Group.
34. Ms. Hasegawa to share the questionnaire on indicators to the Regional Seas colleagues. All the Regional Seas that have not submitted information are still invited to provide any relevant information to the Working Group.
35. UNEP together with interested Regional Seas to explore potential options to manage data through the UNEP-live platform.
36. The next working group meeting will be conducted through the "Go-to Meeting" system.

Annex 1: Meeting agenda

1. Overview of the progress of SDG indicators process (UNEP)
2. Progress in the development of Regional Seas indicators
 - National ICZM guidelines and enabling legislation
 - GPA National Action Plan
3. Inter-sessional work before the 18th Global Meeting of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans
 - UNEP's plan
 - Suggestion for mapping (SDGs vs Regional Seas target)

Annex 2: List of Participants

1	<p><u>Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea)</u> Ms. Irina Makarenko <i>Pollution Monitoring and Assessment (PMA) Officer</i> Permanent Secretariat Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution Bucharest Convention Maslak Mahallesi, Büyükdere Caddesi, No 265, Şişli Istanbul, 34398, TURKEY Tel: +90 212 299 2940/+90 212 299 2946 Email: irina.makarenko@blacksea-commission.org, iryna.makarenko79@gmail.com</p>	2	<p><u>Nairobi Convention</u> Mr. Dixon Waruinge <i>Head</i> Nairobi Convention Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI), P. O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya Email: dixon.waruinge@unep.org</p>
3	<p><u>Northwest Pacific Action Plan</u> Dr. Alexander Tkalin <i>Coordinator</i> Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) 5-5 Ushijimashin-machi Toyama City 930-0856, Japan Email: alexander.tkalin@nowpap.org</p>	4	<p><u>Helcom</u> Ms. Johanna Laurila <i>Information Secretary</i> Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) Katajanokanlaituri 6 B FI-00160 Helsinki, Finland Email: Johanna.laurila@helcom.fi</p>
5	<p><u>Helcom</u> Ms. Laura Meski <i>Assisting Professional Secretary</i> Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) Katajanokanlaituri 6 B FI-00160 Helsinki, Finland Email:</p>	6	<p><u>Helcom</u> Ms. Lena Avellan <i>Project Manager</i> Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) Katajanokanlaituri 6 B FI-00160 Helsinki, Finland Email:</p>
7	<p><u>CPPS</u> Mr. Julian Augusto Reyna Moreno <i>Secretary General</i> Permanent Commission for the South Pacific Avenida Carlos Julio Arosemena Km 3 Edificio Classic, 2do Piso, Complejo Alban Borja Guayquil, Ecuador E-mail: sgeneral@cpps-int.org</p>	8	<p><u>Cartagena Convention</u> Ms. Lorna Innis <i>Coordinator</i> Caribbean Environment Programme Regional Co-ordinating Unit (CAR/RCU) (Cartagena Convention) 14.20 Port Royal Street Kingston, Jamaica Email: lvi@cep.unep.org</p>

9	<p><u>COBSEA</u> Mr. Reynaldo Molina <i>Consultant</i> UNEP, COBSEA Secretariat United Nations Building, 2nd Floor, Block B Rajadamnern-Nok Avenue Bangkok 10200, Thailand E-mail: molinar@un.org</p>	10	<p><u>Abidjan Convention</u> Mr. Richard Dacosta <i>Program Officer</i> Abidjan Convention Secretariat Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI) Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire Email: richard.dacosta@unep.org</p>
11	<p><u>NILU-Norway and University of Algarve-Portugal</u> Ms. Alice Newton NILU-IMPEC Postboks 100 2027 Kjeller Norway Email: Alice.Newton@nilu.no</p>	12	<p><u>UNEP/DEPI</u> Mr. Takehiro Nakamura <i>Chief</i> Marine & Coastal Ecosystems Unit Division of Environmental Policy Implementation PO Box 30552, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya Email : Takehiro.nakamura@unep.org</p>
13	<p><u>UNEP/DEWA</u> Ms. Joana Akrofi <i>Programme Officer</i> Division of Early Warning and Assessment UNEP United Nations Avenue, Gigiri PO Box 30552, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya Email: joana.akrofi@unep.org</p>	14	<p><u>UNEP/DEPI</u> Ms. Kanako Hasegawa <i>Associate Programme Officer</i> Regional Seas Coordination Unit, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation PO Box 30552, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya Email: kanako.hasegawa@unep.org</p>