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**The 21st Global Meeting of the Regional Seas
Conventions and Action Plans
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3- 5 October 2019**

**Report for the UNEP Regional Seas Programme 21st Annual meeting held on
2-5 October 2019 in Berlin, Germany**

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1.0. Introduction

The annual global meeting of the Regional Seas Programme organized by UNEP is a coordination mechanism of the eighteen (18) Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. This meeting provides a platform for adoption of Global strategies for cooperation, channeling UNEP programmatic support to the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, particularly in areas complementary to the UNEP programme of work and strengthening linkages between the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans and other relevant global conventions and agreements. The Twenty first annual Regional Seas meeting took place at an opportune time when critical discussions on ocean governance are gaining momentum at national, regional and global scales. This includes the on-going intergovernmental processes on a new legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), preparatory phase of the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 and review on the progress on implementation of SDG 14 targets 14.2 and 14.5. The Regional Seas Programme annual meeting took advantage of this momentum to review progress on its work and discussed ways to enhance its support and contribution to these global processes. This report summarizes the outcomes of this meeting including the follow-up actions.

1.1 Opening statements

The meeting was called to order at 9.15 am by Monica Gail MacDevette, Deputy Director and Officer in Charge, Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch, Ecosystems Division, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and thereafter delivered her opening remarks. In her statement, Ms. MacDevette welcomed all the participants and thanked Mr. Rüdiger Stempel the Executive Secretary, Helsinki Convention (HELCOM) for hosting the meeting and congratulated him on his appointment as Executive Secretary for the Helsinki Commission. Ms. MacDevette noted that the 21st meeting of the regional Seas was taking place at a time when critical discussions on ocean governance were gaining momentum citing the example of the just concluded first Marine Regions Forum organized by the Government of Germany under the theme “Achieving Healthy Oceans” aimed at catalyzing action and building new partnerships for stronger ocean governance. She noted that the Sustainable Development Goals related to Oceans already set an ambitious target for

healthy oceans adding that these targets may not be achieved if concrete measures are not put in place to address the myriad of challenges facing the oceans today. She made reference to the special report released by the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the IPCC Special Report on Oceans and the Cryosphere adding that the 21 annual meeting provided the Regional Seas with an opportunity to discuss and share ideas on how to strengthen ocean governance in their respective regions and to deal with the ever increasing and complex environmental challenges. Recalling the United Nations Oceans Conference which first took place in 2017, she reminded the participants of a follow-up conference to be held in June 2020 in Lisbon, Portugal which would give an opportunity to the Regional Seas to make bold commitments towards supporting their participating countries to address climate change. She added that the 21st annual meeting would examine the progress made towards implementing Regional Seas related voluntary commitments and to reflect on the lessons and to the extent possible start planning for ambitious commitments for the UN Oceans Conference in June 2020. She emphasized the need to strengthen Climate Change work within the Regional Seas programme. She informed the meeting that UNEP developed a new Marine and Coastal strategy for 2020-2030 which sets out four ambitious objectives: a) Building a knowledge-base to inform policies that reduce human impacts on oceans; b) Building circularity and promoting sustainable consumption and production; c) Supporting policies and strategies that enable integrated management and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystem services; and d) Sparking innovation on financing instruments for a sustainable blue economy transition.

Ms. MacDevette acknowledged UNEP's active involvement in global discussions on oceans. For example, supporting negotiations of the new internationally legally binding agreement under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), the preparatory phase of the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 and the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework led by the Convention on Biological Diversity. She also acknowledged progress made by UNEP towards implementing the United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions such as on Marine Litter, Nutrients, Global Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. Ms. MacDevette further welcomed the renewed partnership between the Regional Seas and UNEP global

Multilateral Environment Agreements present such as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). She also recognized the presence of other UN agencies such as the Food Agricultural Organization (FAO), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS) and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) including donors and partner organizations such as the SIDA, European Commission, Government of Guatemala, Government of Monaco, Institute for Advance Sustainability Studies (IASS Potsdam), etc. In concluding her remarks, she encouraged all the participants to take advantage of the meeting to discuss and make renewed commitments, strengthen their collaboration and establish new partnerships that would bring the Regional Seas Programme closer to achieving a healthy ocean. Thereafter, Ms. MacDevette invited Rüdiger Stempel, Executive Director, HELCOM to make his opening remarks.

Mr. Rudiger begun by welcoming all the participants to Berlin and to the 21st Global Meeting of the Regional Seas adding that it was also Germany's National Day, a day to celebrate. He however noted that as far as oceans and seas are concerned, there was not all that much to celebrate. The recent HELCOM holistic assessment report showed that the Baltic Sea, was not in a good state. Like other seas and oceans, the latest IPCC special report on oceans and the cryosphere as well as the IPBES report on biodiversity stated that 66 percent of the ocean area was affected by cumulative impacts, corroborating the fact that the marine ecosystems are currently taking a serious hit. He added that Oceans are life support systems and a poor state of our oceans and seas affects our own well-being. In the Baltic Sea for example, the economic loss due to eutrophication alone was estimated to be in the range of EUR 4 billion. Mr. Stempel took pride in the fact that the Regional Seas knew what to do. The assessments and consequently, Regional Seas understanding of their seas, the state and the pressures affecting them was improving and based on solid science, policy makers were taking action. He acknowledged the fact that there were disparities in allocation of resources to safeguard the oceans and seas. Nevertheless, science to underpin Regional Seas work was available, and global, regional and national policy frameworks were in place to address the multiple challenges faced by marine ecosystems around the globe.

Mr. Stempel added that two global frameworks, the SDGs and the Aichi targets were important guidelines for conservation of the global marine environment. The SDGs and Aichi targets are, in fact omnipresent and have proven to be key to advancing the ocean agenda, and decisively influence the policies developed, the strategies and the actions implemented by the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. He referred the 2017 UN Ocean Conference and the decade of Ocean Science, due to start in 2021 adding that these events would provide scientific understanding of the ocean's responses to pressures", understandings which were fundamental for global sustainable development. He added that the Regional Seas were the best place to translate the global visions into action at the regional level since the regional seas span geopolitical boundaries. He also added that it was oceans and seas that their waters and the species inhabiting them are unconcerned by a line on a map, or administrative regulations, or regional strife. They provide the best possible fora for working across this divide for a common good: healthy seas that, as mentioned before, are life supporting systems and that needs to be preserve at all cost to enable sustainable development and, indeed, to survive. Mr. Stempel noted that the 21st Global Meeting of the Regional Seas provided a platform for exchanging experience and information among the Regional Seas, sharing best practices and the ideas needed to advance our common agenda – healthy oceans and seas. He concluded by referencing an editorial for “Time” magazine, where Peter Thomson, the UN Secretary General’s special envoy for the ocean, stressed how much needs to be done to achieve this goal, concluding that “Considering that every second breath we take comes from the ocean, it was clear we must.” Thereafter, he wished all a fruitful meeting.

Ms. MacDevette also took the opportunity to welcome Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. Mr. Payet thanked the Regional Seas Programme for extending the invitation to the BRS Secretariat adding that they have worked closely with the Regional Seas and continues to strengthen that relationship a discussion he was keen to advance during the meeting.

1.2 Round table introductions

Ms. MacDevette invited the participants to introduce themselves. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1 to this report. Thereafter she introduced the agenda of the meeting and invited

the participants to provide comments. The agenda was adopted as was and is attached as Annex 2 to this report.

1.3 Organization of work: Background, purpose and objectives of the meeting

Presenter: Habib El-Habr

Habib El-Habr, Coordinator, Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) presented on the objectives and structure of the meeting. The objectives of the meeting were to (a) Enhance collaboration and strengthen partnerships among the Regional Seas and build new partnerships with the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other partners; (b) Strengthen the role and involvement of the Regional Seas Programme in the on-going global processes; (c) Enhance knowledge and share experiences among the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans; and (d) Re-affirm UNEP's commitment and support to the Regional Seas Programme. The meeting was structured to have PowerPoint presentations followed by brief discussions and follow-up actions recorded.

Session 1: Voluntary Commitments from the 2017 UN Oceans Conference

Facilitator: Yegor Volovik, NOWPAP

a) Update by UNDESA on the 2017 Voluntary commitments

Mr. Yoshinobu Takei Sustainable Development Officer, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nation (UN-DESA) made an overview presentation on the voluntary commitments made during and after the 2017 UN Oceans Conference. The UN Ocean Conference, held from 5 to 9 June 2017 at UN Headquarters, was convened to support the implementation of SDG 14. The event was attended by thousands of high-level participants from Member States, the UN system and other stakeholders including representatives of several Regional Seas Organizations, in addition to the UNEP delegation. The Conference raised global awareness on the importance of our ocean and the challenges it is facing and laid out a roadmap and ambitious work plan for the implementation of SDG 14. The Conference resulted in ambitious outcomes, including an intergovernmental agreed political

declaration “Our ocean, our future: call for action”, which refers regional organizations, bodies and programmes, as well as nearly 1,400 voluntary commitments from Governments and other stakeholders – individually or in partnership. Several Voluntary Commitments relate to the activities of UNEP and RSP, as summarized in the document prepared by UNEP (78 VCs in the document).

Following the conclusion of the Conference, the Secretary-General appointed Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji as his Special Envoy for the Ocean in October 2017. In cooperation with the Special Envoy, DESA has initiated several activities for the follow-up to the Ocean Conference, including the launch of the revamped Ocean Conference website, which serves as an online platform for follow-up activities. UN DESA has also been issuing Ocean Action Newsletters, which contain various useful information on ocean action, including updates from voluntary commitments and newly registered voluntary commitments. Mr. Yoshi informed the meeting that the Registry was still open and accepting new Voluntary Commitments. The total number of Voluntary Commitments registered reached 1569.

Based on the “In-depth analysis of Ocean Conference Voluntary Commitments to support and monitor their implementation”, prepared by DESA, in November 2017, the United Nations launched nine thematic multi-stakeholder Communities of Ocean Action through a series of webinars, with the following three objectives: a) To follow up on the implementation of the voluntary commitments; b) To catalyze and generate new voluntary commitments; and c) To facilitate collaboration and networking amongst different actors in support of SDG 14. These Communities cover nine areas identified on the basis of the in-depth analysis document mentioned earlier, namely: Coral reefs; Implementation of international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; Mangroves; Marine and coastal ecosystems management; Marine pollution; Ocean acidification; Scientific knowledge, research capacity development and transfer of marine technology; Sustainable blue economy; and Sustainable fisheries. He added that anyone who had registered a voluntary commitment on the Ocean Conference website can become a member of any COA they wish, through that website. Through webinars and in-person meetings, the COAs served as forums to share good practices and exchange information on lessons learned. In May 2019, the COAs held an in-person meeting of all COAs involving around 80 Voluntary

Commitment holders and other participants in Incheon, Republic of Korea. In November 2019, the COA on marine and coastal ecosystems management, together with COAs on coral reefs and mangroves, will be holding an in-person meeting of these three COAs as part of the Ocean Pathways Week. Updates on voluntary commitments had overall been submitted by 18 % of Voluntary Commitments as of September 2019. The rate for the UN system and IGO, where Regional Seas Organizations are most likely classified, were at 28%, since this was relatively high percentage, especially compared with Government-submitted Voluntary Commitments. Mr. Yoshi added that updates can be provided through the Ocean Conference website. According to the document prepared by UNEP, many Voluntary Commitments from RSOs had not provided updates. Regional Seas Organizations were encouraged to provide updates on a regular basis. Such updates were important not only to know progress made by individual Voluntary Commitments, but also to take stock of the collective achievement by all stakeholders, and to strategize what should be done to accelerate progress in ocean action.

b) Update by the UNEP HQ on the Regional Seas voluntary commitments

Ms. Nancy Soi, Coordinator, UNEP Regional Seas Programme made a presentation on the UNEP Regional Seas Voluntary Commitments. The Regional Seas Programme registered 4 commitments at the 2017 UN Ocean Conference which were that: (a) at least 5 regions prepare their implementation outlook describing how they will support the implementation of ocean-related SDGs; (b) At least 2 new regions start indicator-based assessment; (c) At least 2 additional regions formalize cooperation with Regional Fisheries Bodies; and (d) that At least 3 regions conduct effectiveness assessment. Ms. Soi informed the meeting that progress on implementation was on track.

c) Status update by each Secretariat

Representatives of the Secretariats of the Conventions and Action Plan present also made brief overview on the status of implementation of their voluntary commitments. A summary on progress on implementation is attached as Annex 3.

Session 2: Regional Seas input to the June 2020 UN Ocean Conference

Facilitator: Gaetano Leone, UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat

a) Brief update on the preparations towards the June 2020 UN Ocean Conference and discussions on Regional Seas role and input

Mr. Yoshinobu made a presentation on the *2020 UN Oceans Conference* and the timeline for its preparation. The theme of the Conference will be Science and Innovation. He added that it will include 8 plenary sessions, 8 interactive dialogues, side events in the Blue Zone and side events outside the Blue Zone under the leadership of the host country. He also added that the background report by the Secretary General will be completed by January 2020; that the Preparatory Meeting will be held in February 2020 and that the draft declaration will be ready by May 2020.

The accreditation of Regional Seas administered by UNEP was discussed. The meeting expressed the desire for the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plan to be accreditation independently from UNEP. The meeting agreed to continue the discussions with New York and UNEP Headquarters.

The meeting further considered several contributions by the Regional Seas Programme to the 2020 UN Oceans Conference which can be delivered collective/global (by the Regional Sea Programme, under UNEP's leadership and coordination); specific to individual Regional Sea Conventions and Action Plans or prepared jointly by sub-groups of Regional Seas and/or with other partners. An example was the Regional Seas input to the SG's report. The meeting agreed that Regional Sea Conventions and Action Plans will be involved in the preparation of the UNEP submission to the SG's report. The request for inputs was circulated by UNEP HQs with the deadline of end of October 2019. It was agreed that the submission would be coordinated by UNEP HQs. Other inputs will take the form of Voluntary Commitments and side events. The meeting also agreed that the involvement and support of Member States/Contracting Parties, in the most appropriate ways for each governance set-up, are important to increase ownership and visibility of the Regional Sea inputs. In addition, the 2017 experience of the Regional Governance Day held in the margins of the UN Conference with support by Germany and Sweden was recalled as a valid example of such cooperation. Partnership and linkages with other SDGs were suggested as important areas of focus

for the Regional Seas' inputs. It was also suggested to identify ways to demonstrate the cumulative impact of the voluntary commitments submitted by the Regional Sea Conventions and Action Plans to the 2017 UN Ocean Conference. The meeting emphasized the importance of strong coordination at UNEP level.

b) Presentation on the outline of the Regional Seas SDG 14 Outlook report

One product that will be presented at the 2020 Conference will be the *Regional Seas SDG 14 Outlook*. Representatives of UNEP-WCMC introduced the main elements of the Report. It was emphasized that the Report was not only a collection of data, but a review of the value that the work of the Regional Seas Programme adds to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was agreed that the Regional Seas would be fully involved and consulted in drafting of the Report. The draft outline of the outlook report is attached as Annex 4 of this report.

c) Summary of the outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum

Mr. Sebastian Unger, Research Group Leader at Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS Postdam) briefed the meeting on the outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum, a conference that preceded the Annual Meeting of the Regional Seas. The Marine regions forum was an initiative by Germany and the European Commission during the UN Oceans Conference held in New York in 2017 and Our Oceans Conference event organized by the European Commission in Malta also in 2017 respectively. At this two events, Germany and European Commission announced their support in establishing a multi-stakeholder platform for regional ocean governance now known as Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG). The PROG was the starting point for the development of a conceptual approach for effective cross-sectoral governance for the protection and sustainable use of the oceans, and regional exchanges of "good-practice" examples. Through the PROG, the Marine Regions Forum was established focusing on learning and dialogue processes between regions ("region-to-region"), as well as between the regional and global levels ("region-to global"). This Marine Regions Forum was the first international conference organized with a view to discuss its long-term application for strengthening international cooperation in the field of marine protection, both at regional and at

the UN level. The draft outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum are attached as Annex 5 of this report.

d) Introduction to Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species; and the Convention on Migratory Species

Ms. Melanie Virtue, Head Aquatic Species at the Convention on *Migratory Species* (CMS) and Ms. Karen Gaynor, Scientific Support Officer at the *Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species*; made presentations on the work of their Conventions. Thereafter, the meeting discussed opportunities for collaboration between the two global Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and the Regional Seas Programme and the value of such collaboration in terms of enforcement of global and regional commitments was emphasized. The meeting agreed to strengthen their collaboration including by sharing outcomes of their Conferences of Parties, supporting to review and provide input to technical reports and assessments.

Session 3: Communicating better the Regional Seas Programme work on Climate Change and nature-based solutions

Facilitator: Soffia Gudmundsdottir (PAME International Secretariat)

a) Presentation on the status update of UNFCCC, UN Climate Action Summit and findings of the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a changing climate

Mr. Niklas Hagelberg Sub-Programme Coordinator, Climate Change Sub-Programme introduced UNEP's work on Climate Change. The objective of UNEP's work in climate change is that countries increasingly make the transition to low-emission economic development and enhance their adaptation and resilience to climate change. He highlighted the main findings of the IPCC Special report such as acceleration of sea level rise, shrinking of the Earth's terrestrial cryosphere affecting water resources and their uses, increase in severity and frequency of marine heatwaves adding that this were important areas for the Regional Seas Programme. Mr. Hagelberg further

informed the meeting that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has held 4 Conferences of Parties where Oceans have been featured quite prominently and this were COP 21 in Paris where they launched the Oceans Day which is now held at every COP; COP 22 in Marrakech where they launched the ‘Roadmap to Oceans and Climate Action Initiative’; COP 23 in Bonn where they launched the Oceans Pathway aimed at increasing the role of ocean considerations in the UNFCCC process and to significantly increase action in priority areas impacted by ocean and climate change. COP 24 at Katowice the Ocean Day focused on nexus between oceans and climate and COP 25 was titled the Blue COP.

Mr. Hagelberg concluded his presentation by highlighting opportunities for further climate change work under the Regional Seas programme such as Ecosystem based Adaptation and technology transfer including migration. On mitigation side, he added ecosystem restoration, renewable energy such as offshore wind power and wave energy, greening the maritime transport and fisheries sector and offshore oil and gas explorations.

b) Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch work on Climate Change

Thereafter, Ms. MacDevette invited Mr. Ole Vestergaard, Programme Management Officer, UNEP Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch to make a brief presentation on Marine Ecosystems Branch work on Climate change. He gave an example of the *UN Environment Blue Forests Project*, a global initiative focused on harnessing the values associated with coastal carbon and other ecosystem services to achieve improved ecosystem management and support climate resilient communities. The project is executed by GRID-Arendal and is supported by funds from the Global Environment Facility and partners worldwide. Project sites are in the Americas, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. At these sites, blue carbon and other ecosystem values are assessed, communities are engaged, and national capacity is enhanced through training and supporting policy implementation.

c) Communicating Climate Change Adaptation: Lessons, opportunities and experiences from the Climate Change Adaptation Unit

Thereafter, Ms. MacDevette invited Ms. Jessica Troni, Head of Climate Change Adaptation Unit, Jessica Troni made a presentation on UNEP’s work on Climate change Adaptation highlighting

on-going work funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), Adaptation Fund (AF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

The meeting emphasized the need to strengthen regional Seas work on Climate Change and to work closely with the Climate Change Adaptation Unit to develop bankable projects such as on nitrates.

Session 4: Progress on implementation of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017-2020 and new strategic guidance post 2020

Facilitator: Jerker Tamelander (COBSEA)

a) Overview presentation on the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017-2020 and summary of achievements

Mr. Habib El-Habr, Coordinator, GPA made a presentation highlighting the progress made in implementation of the Regional Seas strategic Directions 2017-2020. The Regional Seas Strategic directions document has 4 strategic objectives:

- a) Reduce marine pollution of all kinds in line with the SDG Goal 14.1.
- b) Create increased resilience of people, marine and coastal ecosystems, and their health and productivity, in line with the SDG Goal 13 and decisions made at the UNFCCC COP21.
- c) Develop integrated, ecosystem-based regional ocean policies and strategies for sustainable use of marine and coastal resources, paying close attention to blue growth.
- d) Enhance effectiveness of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans as regional platforms for supporting integrated ocean policies and management.

The report showed significant progress on strategic objective (a) on marine pollution and (c) on ecosystem based regional ocean policies and strategies for sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. The report also showed that further action was required on increasing resilience of people, marine and coastal ecosystems and on enhancing effectiveness of regional seas conventions and action plans as regional platforms for supporting integrated ocean policies and management. The report further highlighted challenges, lessons learnt including proposed areas for further action.

b) Summary update by each Secretariat

Thereafter, representatives of the Regional Seas Convention Secretariats and Action Plans present provided updates on progress on implementation of the strategic directions in their regions. A summary of progress made in each region is provided in Annex 6 of this report.

The meeting discussed the relevance of the strategic directions to their individual strategic directions and whether this document was an additional reporting burden. The meeting acknowledged that the strategic directions document was a communication tool. It harmonized the individual contributions to generate a regional perspective and provides partners that can work with the Regional seas an entry point.

Session 5: New Regional Seas Strategic Guidance Document post 2020 continued

Facilitator: Jerker Tamelander (COBSEA)

a) Presentation on mission on Oceans under the EU Horizon Europe

Ms. Gesine Meissner a representative from Horizon Europe made a presentation on the mission areas focusing on research and innovation which include healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters, climate change among others. The Horizon Europe had a proposed budget of 100 Billion Euros expected to support excellent science, global challenges and innovation in Europe in the period between 2021 and 2027. Ms. Meissner called on the Regional Seas particularly those based in Europe to provide support towards shaping the priorities for healthy oceans, seas and coastal inland waters in Europe.

b) Presentation on the proposed outline of the new Regional Seas Programme Strategic Guidance Document post 2020

Ms. Nancy Soi was then invited to present on the proposed outline for the Regional Seas Strategic Directions post 2020. To prepare the regional Seas Strategic Directions 2021-2024 would analyze lessons learnt from implementation of the 2017-2020 strategic directions. The process will also

include a review of the current global processes influencing the proposed strategic directions 2021-2024 such as relevant Sustainable Development Goals 2020-2030, UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the on-going discussions on the legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), the IPCC special report on the Ocean and Cryosphere, IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Strategic documents for the individual Regional Seas Convention and Action Plan and related MEAs, UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021 and the Programme of Work, relevant United Nations Environment Assembly Resolutions (UNEA), the Marine and Coastal Strategy for UNEP 2020-2030, among others. The outline included five objectives. Objective 1 was on tackling Climate Change, objective 2 was on pollution, objective 3 was on biodiversity and objective 4 was on ecosystem assessments and objective 5 was on knowledge management. The first draft of the document is expected to be ready in March 2020 and ready for review by all the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. Thereafter a second and third drafts will be developed in June and August 2020 respectively for possible adoption in October or November 2020 at the 22-annual meeting of the Regional Seas.

The meeting discussed the proposed outline and agreed that there was a need to strike a balance between the proposed actions and available timescale. Other ideas proposed for consideration were:

- Clarity on the ultimate purpose with relation with other strategies.
- Acknowledge areas that the individual conventions and action plans are doing.
- What are the new means of delivering?
- Shape the narrative- how we share with our external audiences.
- Collective achievements within the 4 years.
- The collective need to be served by core.
- Need to involve the private sector.
- Collaboration with line ministries i.e. Ministries of Agriculture, fisheries.
- Normative work should be reflected.
- Blue economy/blue growth should be reflected in the document.

- Consider involving the conventions and action plans in developing the document.

Session 6: Regional Seas' input to the implementation framework of the new Marine and Coastal Strategy for UNEP 2020- 2030

Facilitator: Dixon Waruinge (Nairobi Convention)

a) Presentation of the new Marine and Coastal Strategy for UNEP 2020-2030 and proposed Regional Seas input

Mr. Takehiro Nakamura, Head of the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Unit made a presentation on the UNEP Marine and Coastal Strategy 2020-2030 saying that the objectives of the strategy were to and *outlined* four strategic objectives.

1. Strategic Objective 1: Establish knowledgebase on marine and coastal ecosystems to inform policies on human activities affecting their functions.
2. Strategic Objective 2: Build circularity in our economies and promote sustainable consumption and production approaches to address marine pollution and resource use.
3. Strategic Objective 3: Support policies and strategies enabling integrated management and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystem services.
4. Strategic Objective 4: Innovate financing instruments and initiatives facilitating sustainable blue economy transition

Thereafter, the meeting discussed the need to clearly link the theory of change on human wellbeing and the proposed outcomes and strategic objectives in the strategy. The meeting further requested for additional information on how the strategy would be implemented i.e. the role of different actors and funding mechanism.

Session 7: Knowledge management and exchange among the Regional Seas Programme

Facilitator: Rüdiger Stempel (HELCOM)

a) Keynote presentation by BANOS CSA

Mr. Andris Andrusaitis the Acting Executive Director of BONUS-BANOS – a joint Baltic Sea and North Sea research and development programme funded by European Parliament, made a keynote presentation on the scientific research by eight EU member states plus Russian Federation. BONUS brings together the research communities of marine, maritime, economical and societal research to address the major challenges faced by the Baltic Sea region. Notable achievements of the programme was that it implemented 64 transnational research and innovative projects, made suggestions for improvement on relevant public policies contributed to several stakeholder committees and working groups and contributed to sharing of significant marine research infrastructures.

b) Presentation on UNEP's knowledge management and exchange

The Chair invited Mr. Pascal Peduzzi, Director GRID Geneva to make a presentation on the proposed UNEP Environment situation room. This follows a UNEA 4 resolution which requested UNEP to develop a platform known as Environment Situation room. The Environment Situation Room is a dynamic knowledge platform designed to collect, process and share satellite data and the world's best environmental science and research. The platform includes critical tools to review progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Mr. Peduzzi informed the meeting that the platform would include a page on coastal and marine environment and urged the Regional Seas to support by providing reviewing and providing inputs to support develop the page. The World Environment Situation Room is available at: <https://environmentlive.unep.org/wesr/>

c) Presentation on the MAP-MedPartnership Project

The Chair also invited Mr. Gaetano Leone, Coordinator Mediterranean Action Plan and Barcelona Convention who made a presentation on the MedProgramme, a GEF funded project on knowledge management. The project is a culmination of over 20 years of work. More than 20 years ago, UNEP/MAP and GEF began a fruitful partnership to develop a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis TDA/Strategic Action Plan (SAP) Approach for the Mediterranean. This consist of: STEP 1: The diagnosis of the (Mediterranean) system TDA made in 1997 and updated in 2005.

The TDA was a facilitative process of engagement and consultation with all the key stakeholders to help the participating countries to 'agree on the facts'. The Mediterranean TDAs identified three overarching environmental quality objectives to address major environmental concerns: 1) reduce the impacts of land-based pollution sources on Mediterranean marine environment and human health; 2) sustainable productivity from fisheries; and 3) conserve the marine biodiversity and ecosystem.

STEP 2: Developed a regional policy documents endorsed by the government of the countries in the Mediterranean known as the Strategic Action Plans. SAP BIO (2003) and SAP MED (2005) on Biodiversity and LBS pollution respectively were developed in partnership with the GEF (including their update in 2015). STEP 3: Once the diagnosis (TDA) was done and the overall (regional) strategies to overcome the problems were made (SAP), national action plans were developed. The GEF supported the MedPartnership in 2010-2015 to develop the elements such as national strategies, methodologies, analysis, etc. which were essential to support countries in defining and approving National Action Plans (NAPs). The NAPs identified hotspots of intervention and investments niches at the national level.

STEP 4: The MedProgramme is a holistic GEF programmatic Approach that resulted from the full implementation of the TDA-SAP and NAPs approach. The Programme will support the action of UNEP/MAP over the period 2019-2024. The MedProgramme aims to accelerate the implementation of agreed upon priority actions to reduce the major transboundary environmental stresses affecting the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal areas while strengthening climate resilience and water security and improving the health and livelihoods of coastal populations. UNEP/MAP is leading this coordinated effort of the Barcelona Convention and its Regional Activity Centres, EBRD, EIB, UNESCO, UNIDO, IUCN, WWF-MedPO, GWP-MED. The programme has been endorsed and will deploy action in Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey and financed by GEF grant of 47,390,000 form 4 GEF focal areas, i.e. International Waters, Chemical and Waste, Biodiversity and Special Climate Change Adaptation Fund.

MedProgramme complement its technical assistance interventions with a large investment portfolio (approx. US\$ 600,000,000), to address the needs defined by the updated NAPs, supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European

Investment Bank (EIB). The GEF grants will be used by the EIB to develop pre-investment studies to target hotspots and priority areas identified by the updated NAPs (2015) and to unlock investments for a min. of US\$ 600,000,000.

The MedProgramme strives to become a knowledge hub in the Mediterranean basin to scale up successful practices, encourage broader adoption, promote knowledge sharing and support the common objectives of the contracting parties of the Barcelona Convention. The objectives of the programme are to: a) Leverage and systematically share knowledge assets generated by the Child Projects with the intended beneficiaries and audiences; b) Strengthen the science-policy interface (SPI) and influence decision-making through data and information sharing, capacity building, and regional stakeholder engagement; c) Support the objectives of the Barcelona Convention and the work of the UN Environment MAP system through effective stocktaking and scaling up of program results; and d) Foster incremental innovation within GEF programmatic approaches and enrich the knowledge base of GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies.

d) Presentation on Blue Solutions Project

The Chair invited Mr. Christian Neumann from Grid Arendal to present on the Blue Solutions Project which seeks to support countries implement the Convention on Biodiversity. This project is jointly implemented by GIZ, GRID-Arendal, IUCN and UN Environment and is dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity. The project identifies and disseminates successful on-the-ground solutions that concern a wide range of marine topics. In addition, it contributes to capacity development through training courses and different exchange formats. The project also collates results of exchanges and advises on how to integrate approaches into national and regional strategies as well as into planning processes. The project funded by IKI is in its second phase and has identified over 200 practical solutions. The solutions are backed by a network of experts in different parts of the world.

e) Integrated Ocean Governance: FAO's experience with Regional Fisheries Bodies and Organizations (RFBOs) and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs)

The Chair also invited Mr. Piero Mannini from the FAO who made a presentation on FAO's support to Regional Fisheries Bodies and management organizations. FAO has a global mandate to promote and, when appropriate, to recommend national and international action pertaining, inter alia, to fisheries research, conservation and management, and development. Recognizing the critical role of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFB) for promoting long term sustainable fisheries where international cooperation is required in conservation and management, FAO has committed to provide its technical and administrative support to its own RFBs with a view to strengthening their effectiveness and to promote collaboration and consultation among all RFB or arrangements on matters of common concern. This consists of facilitating meetings of RFB, implementation by RFB of sustainable policies and practices and the effective implementation of the post-UNCED instruments (including cooperation between RFB and FAO programmes) issues relating to reporting on status and trends of fisheries, and reporting to, and liaising with, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations regarding collecting and disseminating information.

Mr. Mannini listed three categories of RFB - in terms of institutional relationship with FAO:

- Established under FAO's constitution – There are two types of RFB in this category, those established based on Article VI of the FAO Constitution and those established based on Article XIV. The differences are mainly in terms of finance, mandate and autonomy whereby Article XIV bodies (such as APFIC, GFCM, IOTC and RECOFI) are more autonomous than the Article VI bodies (such as CECAF, CIFFA, WECAFC, COPESCAL).
- Established outside the FAO framework but with FAO depository functions – This means that the Director-General of FAO exercises depository functions for organizations such as ICCAT, NACA, COMHAFAT, LVFO, SEAFO and SIOFA.
- Established outside FAO's framework – FAO closely monitors these RFB due to their importance in global and regional fisheries governance. FAO normally sends its staff to annual meetings of those organizations (such as NAFO, NEAFC, WCPFC, IATTC and CCAMLR).

He added that a broad tool or process that has outcomes relevant to the reduction of fisheries impact on the ecosystems is the performance review process that RFMO have been undergoing performed

by independent experts. Regional Fishery Bodies (RFB) are the critical vehicles for promoting long-term sustainable fisheries where international cooperation is required in conservation and management. The international community has focused on the need to strengthen RFBs (Regional Fisheries Bodies) and the RFMOs. Many RFMOs are taking steps to strengthen governance through implementing the ecosystem approach to fisheries and adopting the precautionary approach. Mr. Mannini concluded by adding that in other fora, parties have advocated for strengthening of their role and modernization of their operation by urging RFMOs to fill in gaps in their mandates to include ecosystem and biodiversity considerations, the precautionary approach, strengthen integration, coordination and cooperation with regional seas arrangements and other relevant organizations.

Session 8: Ecosystems assessment and indicators – Methodologies and approaches including best practices among the Regional Seas

Facilitator: Christopher Corbin (Cartagena Convention)

a) Keynote presentation by HELCOM on its experience on ecosystems assessments and indicators-based approaches

Mr. Dominik Littfass, Communications Officer, HELCOM Secretariat presented HELCOM's assessment and methodology approaches in the Baltic Sea. The Baltic Sea is a fragile semi-enclosed water body, with limited water exchange. It has limited amount of species, many of them already adapted to the brackish conditions.

Wholistic assessment conducted between 2011 and 2016 showed signs of improvement, but Baltic Sea Action Plan and ecological objectives were yet to be reached. Eutrophication remains a major pressure. Other challenges include littering especially from plastics, pharmaceutical residues, underwater sound, seabed disturbance and effects from climate change. The Baltic Sea's biodiversity is also not in a good state. Overall, the Baltic Sea's biodiversity is not in a good state. HELCOM uses 30 core indicators to undertake the holistic assessments. The indicators assess the status of selected elements of biodiversity and human-induced pressures on the Baltic Sea against regionally agreed threshold values, based on current knowledge and available data for the assessment. In addition, integrated assessments for biodiversity, eutrophication and contamination

status are made, based on the core indicators. HELCOM core indicators form the basis for HELCOM environmental assessments as defined in the HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy which was adopted by the 2013 Copenhagen HELCOM Ministerial Meeting. HELCOM core indicators are commonly agreed indicators among the Contracting Parties of the Helsinki Convention with commonly adopted quantitative threshold values or environmental targets. State core indicators evaluate the status against a quantitative threshold value. Pressure core indicators measure the progress towards an environmental target. For marine litter, underwater sound, and seabed loss and disturbance the assessment is descriptive since HELCOM core indicators are still under development. The threshold value or environmental target are adopted by all Contracting Parties of HELCOM and are described in detail in the core indicator report. The core indicator report also describes the indicator assessment protocol and the general indicator concept. State core indicators are indirectly linked to anthropogenic pressures and the link is described either qualitatively or quantitatively as appropriate. A core indicator measures the progress towards reaching a Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) objective. For those Contracting Parties that are also EU Member States, the core indicators can also be used to assess criteria under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

b) Presentation on experiences from the Mediterranean Sea

Thereafter Mr. Gaetano Leone, Coordinator Mediterranean Action Plan/ Barcelona Convention shared assessment experiences from the Mediterranean region. The objective of assessments in the Mediterranean region was to ensure integrated management of human activities that may affect the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment with the view to promote sustainable development and achieve/maintain Good Environmental Status. He listed several decisions and guiding frameworks adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Mediterranean to guide its work on assessments. AA road map was adopted which included adoption of an ecological vision for the Mediterranean, set up common strategic goals, identified important ecosystem properties, developed a set of ecological objectives corresponding to the vision and strategic goals. Thereafter, MAP/Barcelona revised existing monitoring programmes for ongoing assessments and updated its targets. It set out necessary elements for establishment of region-wide Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP), developed 23 regionally agreed common indicators and 4

candidate indicators covering 9 out of 11 MAP Ecological Objectives. To date, the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) has developed guidance factsheets for each indicator and endorsed by the Contracting Parties. The IMAP indicators are currently being tested, reporting system is being developed and a pilot data management information system was not yet available to the public. 11 indicators have been approved, data standards and dictionaries have been developed and tested and a review and harmonization with the reporting system on-going.

c) Presentation on experiences from the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

Thereafter, the Chair invited Prof. Zaid Ghararah, Secretary General, Jeddah Convention to present on PERSGA's experience. The Red Sea area is considered one of the world's depository of marine biodiversity and is home to over 1000 species of fish out of which 165 species are endemic to the Red Sea. The Red Sea is also a unique refuge for coral reefs impacted by climate change. He added that PERSGA had undertaken several assessments including on mainstreaming ecosystems approach in the "Regional Standard Survey Methods for Habitats & Species", and in ecosystem approach principles as indicators in assessment of national policies and alternative livelihood options. Through these assessments, PERSGA has been able to review fisheries laws and policies in order to integrate ecosystem-based management and co-management principles in the laws of participating countries. PERSGA was also able to identify alternative livelihood options among local communities living around Marine Protected Areas. It has also mainstreamed ecosystems approach to regional survey methods for species and habitats. An example of the assessments by PERSGA was the State of the Marine Environment Report for the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

d) Presentation experiences from the Mami Wata project

Mr. Abou Bamba, Coordinator, Abidjan Convention and Christian Neumann from Grid Arendal presented on the Mami Wata project on enhancing marine management capacity in West, Central and southern Africa. Mami Wata is a project funded by IKI, is a 4 year project which aims to develop capacity on integrated Ocean management at institutional and technical level. This includes conducting trainings workshops, experts and practitioner exchange and knowledge exchange and sharing. The project also has a component on proof of concept where three pilot sites have been identified, selected and under implementation. The project will also develop

guidelines and provide support on the application of several tools on integrated ocean management such as state of the marine environment reporting (SoME), CBD Ecologically and Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP).

e) Presentation on UNEP’s Ecosystems Assessment methodologies and approaches

Thereafter, the Chair invited Ms. Soi to present on UNEP’s Ecosystems Assessment methodologies and approaches. She informed the meeting that UNEP used the Integrated Environment Assessment methodology to undertake its assessments. Integrated Environmental Assessments (IEA) are powerful tools to help inform the development of evidence-based environmental policy and decision making, bring relevant scientific findings to a broad audience and raise awareness of changing environmental conditions as well as identify emerging environmental issues. It also provides a forum for stakeholders, including scientists, policymakers, and decision-makers to interact and discuss environmental issues and potential solutions. IEA have been part of UNEP following Resolution 2997 of the 1972 United Nations (UN) Conference on The Human Environment, Stockholm, that stated, in part, that UNEP “should keep the global environment under review”. She added that an Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) is a unique type of assessment in that it links science to policy by analyzing and synthesizing existing environmental, social and economic data, to determine the state of the environment using the Driver-Pressure-State-Impact Response (DPSIR) framework, considering all ecosystem components and processes, determining risk and uncertainty in the information, identifying and assessing past and potential management actions; and providing guidance for decision makers on the consequences of varying management actions, including inaction. Using the integrated environmental assessment (IEA) methodology, UNEP has produced six GEO reports thus far, which have analyzed environmental state and trends at the global and regional scales, described plausible outlooks for various time frames and formulated policy options. Each GEO report builds on the assessment findings of its predecessor and draws from lessons learnt.

The meeting discussed the role Regional Seas Programme on assessment indicators and agreed that the indicator working group to be revitalized and to agree on the indicators and areas to monitor and take action for consideration in the next meeting of the Regional Seas programme.

UNEP Headquarters where requested to identify catalytic resources to support the indicator working group.

Session 9: Marine Litter and UNEA Resolutions

Facilitator: Stuart Chape, (SPREP)

a) UNEA Resolutions – status update and progress on implementation

Mr. Takahiro Nakamura made a presentation on the UNEA Resolutions relevant to the Regional Seas and this include UNEA 2/10 on Oceans and Seas; UNEA 2/12 on sustainable coral reefs management; UNEA 4/12 on Mangrove management among others. Thereafter the meeting discussed and cautioned that the discussions regarding extending the geographical scope of the Regional Seas Programme needs to be pursued strategically and with lots of caution. The meeting further agreed to elevate the Regional Seas role to a topic rather than being a mentioned within the text of the resolution.

b) Presentation on progress update on Marine Litter working Group established by UNEA 4

Mr. Habib El-Habr updated the meeting on the status of implementation of the resolutions on marine litter such as UNEA 2/11, 3/7, 4/6 on Marine plastic litter and micro-plastics and UNEA 4/14 on Nitrogen management. Mr. El-Habr informed the meeting that the resolution on Marine plastic litter and microplastics (UNEA.4/6), 11 Regional and National Action Plans on Marine Litter had been developed, a Scientific Advisory Committee establishment, 3 Ad hoc open ended expert group meeting to be organized and a MOOC on marine litter delivered. On resolution UNEA 4/11 on protection of the marine environment from land-based activities a regional activity center for Clean Seas had been established in Bali, Indonesia and a Training of Trainers on marine litter monitoring conducted. Under resolution UNEA 4/14 on Sustainable nitrogen management, he informed the meeting that a Nitrogen Global Campaign had been launched, a Working Group on Sustainable Nitrogen Management and a Roadmap for Action on Sustainable Nitrogen Management 2020-2022 was under development.

c) Update on UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030

The Chair invited Ms. Nancy Soi to present on behalf of Tim Christophersen, Coordinator Freshwater, Land and Climate Ecosystems Branch, UNEP an update on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The UN Decade was adopted in March 2019 by UNGA Resolution A/RES/73/284 and it aims to prevent, halt and reverse ecosystem degradation and to raise awareness of importance of ecosystem restoration. The Decade builds on existing commitments such as the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN - UNCCD), Bonn Challenge (Government of Germany and IUCN), Initiative 20x20 (Latin America and the Caribbean), Africa Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR 100- AU-NEPAD). UN FAO and UNEP are leading on the implementation in collaboration with the RIO Conventions. She informed the meeting that several stakeholder consultations have been conducted alongside UNFCCC, GLF, UNCCD and CBD OEWG. Key messages to date have been to go beyond what “would happen anyway”, accelerate progress, to involve a wide range of organizations and individuals and to advance from information sharing & awareness to active engagement. Following the presentation, the meeting noted that the UN Decade on ecosystem restoration was terrestrial focused. The meeting proposed that the two decades on UN Decade of ocean science and on ecosystem restoration need to speak to each other and therefore a link needs to be fostered between the two decades. It was also suggested that an analysis needs to be conducted to assess how land restoration contributes to ocean ecosystem restoration. Mr. Chris McOwen informed the meeting that a marine team had been formed to look at the UN Decade on ecosystem restoration and propose options to make it ocean focused too.

d) Partnership between Regional Seas Programme and Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Regional Centres- Outcomes of existing partnerships and lessons learnt

The Chair invited Ms. Susan Wingfield, Programme Officer Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to present on the partnership between Regional Seas Programme and Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Regional Centres- Outcomes of existing partnerships and lessons learnt. BRS is one of the UNEP administered Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Basel Convention is concerned with the Control of Transboundary Movements of

Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. Its objective is to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects of hazardous wastes. It does so by supporting minimization of generation of waste, promoting environmentally sound management and providing conditions and procedures for controlling transboundary movements. The Rotterdam Convention deals with Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade such as DDT. Part of the Rotterdam Convention is administered by FAO in Rome. The Stockholm Convention on the other hand is on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) such as PCDs, PIFOR, etc. 30 POPs are so far regulated under this convention.

Ms. Wingfield informed the meeting that the three conventions were brought together to enhance collaboration and enable experts at country level to talk to each other. She added that the Basel Convention was concerned with transboundary movement of waste and prior informed consent procedures adding that wastes that require a prior consent were those in Annex I, III, VIII (hazardous wastes) and other wastes under Annex II. The Convention also focuses on environmentally sound management of waste by supporting countries to develop tools and methodologies. The Convention also supports prevention and minimization of waste in countries such as China, Malaysia, Phillipines, Indonesia among others.

The main achievements this far have been the introduction of plastic waste Amendment under the Basel Convention (Annex II: Y48, Annex VIII: A3210, and Annex IX: B3011 on certain single polymers or mixture of PE, PP and/or PET. The amendments will take effect as of 1 January 2021. Further actions to address plastic waste under the Basel Convention was the need for urgency on the issues that needs to be addressed as well as collaboration by the Basel Convention with other organisations. Second was the plastic waste partnership where terms of references need to be developed. Areas of work under the partnership was strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks, promoting environmentally sound management of plastics, advancing collaboration with the private sector and stimulating outreach, education and awareness raising.

Ms. Wingfield highlighted potential areas for collaboration between BRS and the Regional Seas Programme, which include through regional centres, signing of MOUs and capacity building activities; Welcomed Regional Seas engagement in Plastic Waste Partnership; Modes of engagement and opportunities for future collaboration; and Encouraging an integrated approach to addressing issues of concern to the BRS Conventions and Regional Seas Programmes. Mr. Gaetano Leone added that the Barcelona Convention was already collaborating with the BRS

Conventions to amplify the voice on marine plastic pollution in the Mediterranean and that the two conventions had a shared Regional Activity Centre. He added that there was need to communicate a coherent story, improve governance approaches and sustainable consumption and production. Mr. Christopher Corbin from the Cartagena Convention also mentioned that the two conventions already had shared focal points and a Regional Activity Centre in Trinidad and Tobago and that BRS contributed to the State of the Coast Report. Several other Conventions and Action Plans expressed interested in working with the BRS such as SACEP. The meeting agreed to explore ways in which to strengthen collaboration with BRS such as through signing MOUs.

Session 10: Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network – Global report on the status of coral reefs

Facilitator: Irina Makarenko (Black Sea)

Mr. Francis Staub introduced the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network as an operational network of the International Coral Reef Initiative and works through a global network of scientists, managers, institutions and organisations to provide the best available scientific information on the status and trends of coral reef ecosystems for their conservation and management. He added that coral reefs provide trillions of dollars in goods and services. International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) on the other hand is a partnership between Nations and organizations which strives to preserve coral reefs and their related ecosystems around the world. ICRI was founded in 1994 by Australia, France, Japan, Jamaica, the Philippines, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and now counts more than 60 members. Mr. Staub introduced the new GCRMN Implementation and Governance Plan (IGP), which seeks to strengthen the GCRMN at global, regional and national levels through four primary goals: a) Improve understanding of coral reef of status and trends, globally and regionally; b) Analyse and communicate coral reef biophysical and social and economic trends, providing science-based recommendations in support of raising awareness, management and policy development; c) Enable and facilitate greater utilization of coral reef data, including in research; and d) Build human and technical capacity to collect, analyze and report biophysical and socio-economic data on coral reefs. Mr. Staub added that the ICRI members had endorsed a workplan for the publication of the next GCRMN Status of Coral Reefs

of the World report by mid-2020. This report will be first report on the global status of coral reefs in the last 12 years. He called on the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans with coral reefs to support the course adding that all contributions will be appropriately acknowledged in the report. Several Conventions and Action Plans expressed interest to participate including the Nairobi Convention, COBSEA, Cartagena Convention, among others.

Session 11: Any other business

- a) The participants expressed concern on the structure of the meeting saying it was packed with presentation and that it did not allow adequate time for discussions.
- b) The meeting requested UNEP to organize a session at the UN Oceans Conference to be held in June 2020 in Lisbon, Portugal and at the CBD Congress in 2020.
- c) The meeting also requested UNEP to support to update the factsheets for all the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.
- d) The meeting requested UNEP to fast track the selection process for the Coordinator, Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch.
- e) The meeting agreed to nominate experts to participate at the technical workshop to be held on 25 to 27 November 2019 in Helsinki, Finland.
- f) Mr. Nakamura informed the meeting that the next meeting on the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) would be held on 21 to 24 April 2020 in Busan, Korea.
- g) The Cartagena Convention informed the meeting that they would host the 22nd meeting of the Regional Seas Programme in Kingston, Jamaica.

Session 12: Closing of the meeting

Mr. Habib El-Habr thanked all the participants for the attending the 21st meeting of the Regional Seas Programme. He encouraged all to get involved and prepare for the global events on oceans happening in 2020 such as the UN Oceans Conference. Thereafter he wished everyone a safe journey back home.

Mr. Rudiger Stempel thanked UNEP Regional Seas Programme for the opportunity to host the 21 meeting of the programme. He thanked that the meeting for very informative discussions particularly on the work taking place in different regions adding that the meeting provided a platform for collaboration and provided an opportunity for a collective voice on oceans. He closed the meeting with a famous quote by President John F. Kennedy which say: *“We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea, whether it is to sail or to watch it, we are going back from whence we came.”*

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 Conventions and Action Plans**
Berlin, Germany
 3- 5 October 2019

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

DAY 1: 3 OCTOBER 2019

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
8.30-9.00	Registration
9.00-9.15	Opening of the meeting Opening Statements by: (a) Monika MacDevette, Deputy Director of Ecosystems Division, UNEP and Head of Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Branch a.i. (b) Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (c) Rüdiger Stempel, Executive Secretary, Helsinki Convention (HELCOM)
9.15-10.00	Round table introductions and 3 minutes statement by each Secretariat -Key achievements, upcoming events, etc.
10.00-10.05	Organization of work: Background, purpose and objectives of the meeting <i>Presenter:</i> Habib El-Habr
10.05-10.35	Coffee break

10.35- 11.35	<p>Voluntary commitments from the 2017 UN Ocean Conference</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Yegor Volovik (NOWPAP)- Few words to introduce the session and invite Yoshi from UNDESA to provide an overview on the status of implementation of the voluntary commitments from the 2017 UN Oceans Conference. This will be followed by brief presentations by UNEP HQ and representatives of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Update by UNDESA on the 2017 Voluntary commitments b) Update by the UNEP HQ on the Regional Seas voluntary commitments c) Status update by each Secretariat (3 minutes each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Abidjan Convention b) Antigua Convention c) Barcelona Convention d) Black Sea e) Cartagena Convention f) COBSEA g) CPPS h) HELCOM k) Nairobi Convention l) NOWPAP m) PAME n) PERSGA o) SACEP p) SPREP q) Tehran Convention
11.35- 13.00	<p>Regional Seas input to the June 2020 UN Ocean Conference</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Gaetano Leone (Barcelona Convention)- Few words to introduce the session and invite Yoshi from UNDESA to briefly update on the preparations towards the June 2020 UN Oceans Conference. This will be followed by a brief discussion on the Regional Seas role and input to the June 2020 UN Ocean Conference, for example whether we will submit new Voluntary commitments, organize side event to launch the Regional Seas SDG 14 Outlook report. Representative from UNEP-WCMC will then be invited to present a detailed outline of the Outlook report.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Brief update on the preparations towards the June 2020 UN Ocean Conference and discussions on Regional Seas role and input b. Presentation on the outline of the Regional Seas SDG 14 Outlook report by Chris McOwen, UNEP-WCMC (followed by technical discussions on the proposed outline, regional experts to be engaged, agree on the timelines, propose date and venue for a technical workshop before end of the year)
13.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.00	<p>Regional Seas input to the June 2020 UN Ocean Conference <i>continued</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator: Gaetano Leone (Barcelona Convention) – Finalize discussions on the next steps on the Regional Seas SDG 14 Outlook report. Thereafter, invite Sebastian Unger -IASS, to provide a summary of the outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum and also invite Karen Gaynor from CITES to introduce the work of the CITES and potential areas of collaboration with the Regional Seas Programme.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Summary of the outcomes of the Marine Regions Forum – Sebastian Unger (IASS) d. Introduction on CITES and potential areas for collaboration with the Regional Seas Programme – Karen Gaynor (CITES Secretariat)
15.00-15.30	Coffee break
15.30- 17.30	<p>Communicating better the Regional Seas Programme work on Climate Change and nature-based solutions</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Soffia Gudmundsdottir (PAME International Secretariat) – Briefly introduce the session and invite Niklas Hagelberg from UNEP HQ to make an overview presentation on UNEP’s work on Climate Change. This will be followed by a presentation by Jessica Troni on UNEP’s work on Climate Change Adaptation and a brief presentation by Ole Vestergaard on Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch work on climate change.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Presentation on the status update of UNFCCC, UN Climate Action Summit and findings of the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a changing climate – by Niklas Hagelberg – Climate Change Sub-Programme Coordinator, UNEP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Communicating Climate Change Adaptation: Lessons, opportunities and experiences from the Climate Change Adaptation Unit – by Jessica Troni, Head, Climate Change Adaptation Unit -a.i. c) Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch work on Climate Change - by Ole Vestergaard, UNEP Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch d) Plenary discussions

DAY 2: 4 OCTOBER 2019

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
9.00-9.05	Opening day 2, recap day 1 by Habib El-Habr
9.05-10.45	<p>Progress on implementation of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017-2020 and new strategic guidance post 2020</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Jerker Tamelander (COBSEA)- Briefly introduce the session and invite Habib El-Habr to provide an overview on implementation of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017-2020. This will be followed by brief presentations by representatives of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans present.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Overview presentation on the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017-2020 and summary of achievements b) Summary update by each Secretariat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Abidjan Convention b) Antigua Convention c) Barcelona Convention d) Black Sea e) Cartagena Convention f) COBSEA g) CPPS h) HELCOM i) Nairobi Convention j) NOWPAP k) PAME l) PERSGA m) SACEP n) SPREP o) Tehran Convention
10.45-11.15	Coffee break
11.15- 13.00	<p>New Regional Seas Strategic Guidance Document post 2020 <i>continued</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator: Jerker Tamelander (COBSEA)- Briefly introduce the session and invite Gesine Meissner to make a presentation on EU's priorities on Oceans and Nancy Soi to present the proposed outline of the new Regional Seas Programme Strategic Guidance Document post 2020. This will be followed by plenary discussions on the proposed EU priorities, Regional Seas Strategic Guidance post 2020 outline and next steps.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Presentation on mission on Oceans under the EU Horizon Europe – by Gesine Meissner b) Presentation on the proposed outline of the new Regional Seas Programme Strategic Guidance Document post 2020 – by Nancy Soi (Coordinator, Regional Seas Programme, UNEP) c) Plenary session
13.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00- 15.00	<p>Regional Seas' input to the implementation framework of the new Marine and Coastal Strategy for UNEP 2020- 2030</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Dixon Waruinge (Nairobi Convention)- Briefly introduce the session and invite Takehiro Nakamura from UNEP HQ to present on the strategy.</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Presentation of the new Marine and Coastal Strategy for UNEP 2020-2030 and proposed Regional Seas input - by Takehiro Nakamura (Head, Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Unit, UNEP) b) Plenary session
15.00-15.30	Coffee break
15.30- 17.30	<p>Knowledge management and exchange among the Regional Seas Programme</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Rüdiger Stempel (HELCOM)- Briefly introduce the session and invite Andrusaitis Andris from BANOS CSA to make a keynote presentation followed by MAP, Grid Arendal, FAO and UNEP GRID-Arendal. This will be followed by a plenary discussion on knowledge management and sharing among the Regional Seas.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Keynote presentation by BANOS CSA – Lessons and experiences from the Baltic and North Sea b) Presentation on the MAP-MedPartnership Project – by Gaetano Leone, Barcelona Convention c) Presentation on Blue Solutions Project – by GRID Arendal d) Integrated Ocean Governance: FAO’s experience with Regional Fisheries Bodies and Organizations (RFBOs) and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs)- by Piero Mannini, FAO e) Presentation on UNEP’s knowledge management and exchange - by Pascal Peduzzi – GRID Geneva f) Plenary session

DAY 3: 5 OCTOBER 2019

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
9.00-9.05	Opening day 3, recap day 2 – Habib El-Habr
9.05-10.45	<p>Ecosystems assessment and indicators – Methodologies and approaches including best practices among the Regional Seas</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Christopher Corbin (Cartagena Convention) Briefly introduce the session and invite Rüdiger Stempel from Helcom, Gaetano Leone from Barcelona Convention, Prof. Zaid from Jeddah Convention and Nancy Soi UNEP HQ to make their presentations. This will be followed by plenary discussions and next steps on how strengthen Regional Seas work on Assessments.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Keynote presentation by HELCOM on its experience on ecosystems assessments and indicators-based approaches b) Presentation on experiences from the Mediterranean Sea- by Gaetano Leone c) Presentation on experiences form the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden – by Prof. Zaid Ghararah, Jeddah Convention d) Presentation experiences from the Mami Wata project- by Abou Bamba, Abidjan Convention and Christian Neumann, GRID Arendal e) Presentation on UNEP’s Ecosystems Assessment methodologies and approaches – by Nancy Soi f) Plenary session
10.45-11.15	Coffee break
11.15- 13.00	<p>New and emerging issues post 2020 and Regional Seas Programme Strategic role and input</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Amb. Mentor Villagomez (CPPS)- Briefly introduce the session and invite the speakers for presentations. The presenters for this session will most of them be joining remotely.</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 update by IOC of UNESCO – by Julian Barbieri, UNESCO-IOC b) UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 update by Tim Christophersen, Coordinator, Freshwater, Land and Climate Ecosystems Branch c) International legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) – by Alice Hicuburundi, UNDOALOS d) Progress on post 2020 Biodiversity Framework update by Joe Appiott, CBD Secretariat e) Plenary session
13.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.00	<p>Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network – Global report on the status of coral reefs</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Irina Makarenko (Black Sea)</i></p> <p><i>Presenter: Francis Staub, ICRI Secretariat</i></p>
15.00-15.30	Coffee break
15.30- 17.00	<p>Marine Litter and UNEA Resolutions</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Stuart Chape, (SPREP)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) UNEA Resolutions – status update and progress on implementation by Habib El-Habr and Takehiro Nakamura, UNEP HQ b) Presentation on progress update on Marine Litter working Group established by UNEA 4 – by Habib El-Habr, Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), UNEP c) Partnership between Regional Seas Programme and Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Regional Centres- Outcomes of existing partnerships and lessons learnt – by Rolph Payet, BRS d) Discussion on how Regional Seas Conventions, especially those with LBA protocols can engage with the Basel Convention, in particular with the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Partnership- by Rolph Payet, BRS
17.00-17.10	<p>Any other business</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Rüdiger Stempel, HELCOM</i></p>
17.10-17.30	<p>Closure of the meeting</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Rüdiger Stempel, HELCOM</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Action points from the meeting b) Host for the next Annual meeting c) Closing remarks by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Habib El-Habr, UNEP - Rüdiger Stempel, HELCOM