

**Report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72 of 9 December 2021, entitled “Oceans and the law of the sea”.**

**Contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) regarding paragraphs 33, 35, 167, 179, 202, 204, 205, 216, 220, 221, 222, 224, 225, 227, 229, 230, 231, 235, 238, 245, 246, 249, 251, 259, 270, 272, 281, 307, 314, 329, 332 and 333 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72**

**27 June 2022**

**1. [Paragraph 33 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)**

**Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre- Caribe (REMPEITC) in Curacao serves as the Regional Activity Centre (RAC) for the Cartagena Convention’s Oil Spills Protocol. During the reporting period, REMPEITC-Caribe delivered regional and national [workshops and training on oil spills and maritime affairs](#). Virtual capacity building workshops focused on marine debris, sargassum, marine spatial planning, shoreline clean-up assessment techniques, satellite monitoring of oil spills, the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to address oil pollution, preparedness and response to oil spills, as well as trade and maritime transport in the Caribbean. Additional workshops on national contingency planning were conducted for Panama, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, St. Martin, Anguilla and Grenada.

REMPEITC-Caribe is also organizing workshops on national contingency planning for the Dominican Republic, Antigua and Barbuda and The Bahamas.

In July 2021, Trinidad and Tobago became the first country in the Wider Caribbean Region to set up an operational near-real-time satellite oil spill monitoring programme and started issuing reports for their Exclusive Economic Zone. From May – July 2021, representatives from government agencies received training on satellite oil spill monitoring from the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Institute of Marine Affairs in Trinidad and Tobago, one of the Regional Activity Centres for the Cartagena Convention’s Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS), in partnership with NOAA, is leading the Integrated Early Warning Systems on Oil Spills and Sargassum.

**2. [Paragraph 35 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72](#)**

**UNEA Resolution 5/7, Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste**

During the resumed sessions of UNEA 5.2, the Assembly adopted Resolution 5/7 entitled “Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste”. The resolution recognizes the importance of limiting the release of chemicals and waste into water, *inter alia*, and commits participating parties to strengthen effort to achieve this target, consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**A Regional Marine Spatial Planning Strategy for The Western Indian Ocean**

As part of their capacity-building activities, the SAPPHIRE Project under the Nairobi Convention has partnered with the Nelson Mandela University and a Regional MSP Technical Working Group (TWG) to produce a [Marine Spatial Training Strategy](#) for the East African Region.

### **Twenty-second Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 22) adopted the Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management in the framework of Article 15 of the Land-based Sources Protocol, including their work plans with timetables for implementation. COP 22 also adopted the amendments to the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Land-based Sources Protocol.

COP 22 requested the Secretariat to the Barcelona Convention to provide the necessary assistance to the Contracting Parties for the implementation of the measures provided for in the Regional Plans, while urging the Contracting Parties, intergovernmental organizations, donor agencies, industry, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions to support the implementation of the different measures of the Regional Plans by providing sufficient financial, technical and scientific contribution.

COP 22 also adopted the amendments to the Annexes I, II and IV to the Land-based Sources Protocol, as well as the amendments to the Annex to the Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea.

COP 22 requested UNEP/MAP to provide, upon request and subject to availability of funds, the necessary assistance to the Contracting Parties for the implementation of the measures provided for in the Regional Plan on Marine Litter, specifically through the provision of support for the implementation of technical guidelines developed in the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan – Barcelona Convention system, including the new Guidelines to tackle Single Use Plastic Products in the Mediterranean.

### **Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

Following decisions from the twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the Cartagena Convention, the Secretariat is providing capacity-building to governments in the Wider Caribbean Region to address their development needs in the following areas and through ongoing projects:

- i) Strengthening national and regional capacity to perform environmental quality monitoring: provided to participating countries in the Global Environment Facility-funded Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States ([GEF IWECO](#)) Project. The Regional Laboratory Assessment conducted for GEF IWECO in 2020 aimed to strengthen national and regional capacity to perform environmental quality monitoring. GEF IWECO has committed to capacity building in selected laboratories through the provision of equipment to support environmental quality monitoring (between August 2022 – July 2023) and through training, to support the provision of consistent results fit for the intended purpose. The training series consists of 5 modules prepared by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in conjunction with the University of North Carolina's Water Institute. The training aims to build support for improving and standardizing laboratory practices for water quality sampling and

analysis. The first training “Improving Laboratory Management Practices – An Introduction to ISO 17025” was held on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and the final module will be held on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022 on statistical analysis and data interpretation.

- ii) Building environmental stewardship and climate-resilient livelihoods: In early September 2021, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute completed a series of five online capacity building sessions for mentors under its partnership with the GEF IWEco Project to strengthen and support small and micro enterprises (SMEs) based in the Caribbean. National GEF IWEco project staff were trained to be climate adaptation mentors to help the enterprises select and implement climate proofing actions, working in collaboration with the business development mentors.
- iii) Capacity-Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries – Phase III (ACP MEAs III) project: Capacity-building activities under this project support governments in building their national and institutional frameworks to achieve environmental goals, enhance the implementation /or ratification process of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols as well as other MEAs, effectively manage marine protected areas and reduce the influx of waste entering the marine environment. Two virtual workshops were convened in English and Spanish in November 2021 with Non-Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention’s Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) to promote ratification, identify barriers to ratification, and develop a list of capacity-building needs. Additionally, capacity building materials on marine protected area management will also be developed for the Secretariat by the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute.
- iv) Water and Wastewater Management: This issue is being addressed through the Global Environment Facility-funded CReW+ project (GEF CReW+) ‘An integrated approach to water and wastewater management in the Wider Caribbean Region using innovative solutions and sustainable financing mechanisms’, of which the Cartagena Convention Secretariat is one of three co-executing agencies. The GEF CReW+ Academy was created as the training arm of the project and offers free short courses on water and wastewater management to all stakeholders in the 18 participating CReW+ countries. Capacity building on behavior change relating to the control, reduction and prevention of marine pollution from domestic wastewater will also be provided through GEF CReW+ partnerships. Through co-funding from CReW+, an international online training on Shit Flow Diagrams was delivered by the Global Water Partnership- Caribbean from 21<sup>st</sup> March to 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 for regional professionals. Water and wastewater operators in the region will also benefit from training programmes to be delivered by the Caribbean Water and Sewerage Association Inc. under GEF CReW+.

### 3. Paragraph 167 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72

A report on the Development of a Public Private Partnership to Reduce Marine Pollution from Pleasure Vessels (yachts) and Tourism Centres was commissioned by the Caribbean Public Health Agency under the GEF IWEco project. The results and recommendations from this report will help to inform the best approach for public-private sector partnerships to control, reduce and/or prevent pollution from pleasure vessels and tourism centers.

#### 4. [Paragraph 179 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)

Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention's Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills are required to co-operate in taking all necessary measures, both preventive and remedial, for the protection of the marine and coastal environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, particularly the coastal areas of the islands of the region, from oil spill incidents. Governments are expected to follow the guidelines under the Caribbean Island Oil Pollution Response and Cooperation Plan in responding to oil spills. In their biennial reports, Contracting Parties are required to provide updates on their national policies, laws or plans for preventing, reducing and controlling oil spill pollution at sea.

#### 5. [Paragraph 202 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat has taken note, with concern, of the devastating impacts of the Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease on coral ecosystems which is affecting more than 20 species of corals in Caribbean. Countries such as Turks and Caicos, Honduras and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have already begun to raise awareness about the disease and taken steps to monitor its spread. The Cartagena Convention Secretariat's [White Paper on Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease](#), produced in collaboration with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute in October 2021, provides best management practices, communication techniques and possible interventions that countries in the region can implement to respond to the disease.

#### 6. [Paragraph 204 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72](#)

##### **Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Nairobi Convention, 23-24 November 2021**

The tenth Conference of the Parties of the Nairobi Convention was held virtually from November 23-24, 2021. To support implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land-based sources and activities (WIOSAP) a Critical Habitats Outlook publication is planned for 2022. Additionally, a Regional ecosystem management framework is to be published in 2022. Additionally, in relation to the Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reforms (SAPPHIRE), the Secretariat is finalizing the development of a new ocean governance strategy for the Western Indian Ocean region as a contribution to the African ocean governance strategy. This document is prepared with the participation of the African Union Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

##### **COBSEA and Blue Solutions Initiative on Regional Legal and Policy Frameworks for Marine and Coastal Spatial Planning in the East Asian Seas**

A review of national and regional legal and policy frameworks relevant to marine and coastal spatial planning in the East Asian Seas region by the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) and Blue Solutions Initiative will be finalized in 2022 and will identify key recommended actions on enabling conditions for wider use of marine and coastal spatial planning in marine and coastal ecosystem-based management and development in the region. COBSEA countries have also participated in several trainings related to Marine and Coastal Spatial Planning as organized with Blue Solutions Initiative.

### **Developments under the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)**

In collaboration of the Marine Environmental Studies Laboratory (MESL) of the International Atomic Energy Agency, UNEP/MAP organized Proficiency Tests (PTs) along with related Training Courses on the analysis of trace elements and organic pollutants in marine samples. As a result, actions were taken to identify specific knowledge and technical needs of individual laboratories aiming to apply good laboratory practices for analysis of trace elements and organic contaminants. Work is underway to prepare a new agreement with IAEA aiming to strengthen national capacities to apply harmonized and standardized monitoring and assessment practices related to pollution and marine litter in line with the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP).

In 2021, UNEP/MAP prepared 19 Monitoring Guidelines related to IMAP Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18 and 20 and Analytical Quality Assurance and Reporting Monitoring Data. The Monitoring Guidelines are composed of 98 specific Protocols prepared to support standardization and harmonization of the procedures for all the steps of analytical chain. These Monitoring Guidelines which were approved for use by the national laboratories present coherent manuals to guide technical personnel of IMAP competent laboratories of the Contracting Parties for the implementation of the standardized and harmonized monitoring practices related to the analytical procedures of sampling, sample preservation and transportation, sample preparation and analysis, along with the quality assurance and reporting of monitoring data for IMAP Common Indicators 13, 14, 17, 18 and 20.

### **Gender Mainstreaming in Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management: Principles, Case Studies and Lessons Learned, June 2022**

In June 2022, UNEP and the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) launched the publication “Gender Mainstreaming in Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management: principles, Cases Studies and lessons Learned”. The [report](#) examines how men and women are affected differently by coastal and marine degradation, and presents ten gender mainstreaming principles developed to offer structure and guide the practice of gender mainstreaming into the integrated management of coastal and marine ecosystems. Organized in four sections, the authors first present the ten “tried-and-tested” gender mainstreaming principles. Essentially, the principles presented are the non-recognition of stakeholder’s work, the creation of spaces for them to be heard, the validation and use of men and women’s capacities, the equal redistribution of project-generated resources, gender-based approaches to skill and knowledge development, inclusive decision-making, political mobilization of excluded groups, multistakeholder collaboration, leveraging diversity, equity and inclusion towards local resilience to crises, and sustaining empowerment and ecosystem benefits in the long term. These principles are illustrated by a series of case studies in Fiji, Micronesia, Mexico, Bangladesh, Zanzibar, Kenya, Indonesia, Barbados, India and the Gambia.

Further, the report also underlines the specific effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on coastal living. Finally, it provides key findings and recommendations for those working on marine and coastal ecosystem management projects.

### **Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

Through the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems Project (CLME+) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme and Global Environment Facility, the Cartagena Convention Secretariat financed the execution of ecosystem-based management (EBM) sub-projects in Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. The European Union-funded ACP MEAs III project will build on the successes and lessons learned by scaling up the EBM projects in Guyana and Suriname and promoting an integrated approach to pollution reduction and habitat restoration.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat is engaging in the development of the [PROCARIBE+ project](#) 'Protecting and Restoring the Ocean's natural Capital, building Resilience and supporting region-wide Investments for sustainable Blue socio-economic development' which is a follow up to the [UNDP GEF CLME+ project](#). PROCARIBE+ aims to develop sustainable and resilient ocean-based economies through marine spatial planning, marine conservation, sustainable fisheries and addressing land-based sources of pollution, while also taking into account issues such as gender and climate change.

#### **7. Paragraph 205 of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72**

At the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of Parties of the Barcelona Convention the Contracting Parties endorsed the amendments to the Offshore Protocol and adopted the [Guidelines of conduct for environmental impact assessments](#). The annex to the document outlines the environmental impact assessment process, the screening process to determine whether an environmental impact assessment is required, the requirements and exemptions of such an assessment, as well as guidance for the conduct of these assessments, *inter alia*.

As part of their environmental management policies, Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention are required to undertake technical and other guidelines to assist the planning of their major development projects, in such a way as to prevent or minimize harmful impacts on the Convention area. Governments are required to provide these updates to the Cartagena Convention Secretariat in their national biennial reports.

A Regional Environmental Monitoring Data Portal (REMDAP) will be developed as a clearinghouse mechanism to strengthen the scientific underpinning for effective regional environmental monitoring and assessment. The portal will be a readily available source of reliable data to facilitate evidence-based decision-making by policymakers, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, private sector, *inter alia*. This is being done through the Global Environment Facility-funded project Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (GEF IWeco), under which a scoping assessment was commissioned in 2020 to ascertain the feasibility and best options to establish this portal.

#### **8. Paragraph 216 of United Nations general Assembly resolution 76/72**

Under the Caspian Regional Seas Program, two technical new Meetings of Experts under the Environment Monitoring Programme of Tehran Convention were held in [October 2021](#) and [April 2022](#). The implementation of the Caspian EMP is stipulated in the draft Protocol on Monitoring, Assessment and Information Exchange which is under negotiations. Participants agreed to rely on the categories of

substances listed in the Moscow Protocol (Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities), awaiting further discussions on the parameters of the marine environment to be monitored.

#### 9. [Paragraph 220 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72](#)

Under the Mediterranean Regional Seas Programme, UNEP supports the [Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre \(PAP/RAC\)](#). In February 2022, the [AdriAdapt knowledge platform](#) was launched. The platform is a knowledge base for strengthening climate change resilience for the Adriatic coastal local communities. The content of the platform is produced by the PAP/RAC in collaboration with a series of national institutions and universities ([IUAV](#), [ARPAE](#), [DHMZ](#), [CMCC](#)). The platform offers an integrated adaptation planning tool, adaptation options, case studies, climatic information, guidelines and handbooks, training/conference video recordings.

In March 2022, UNEP published the report entitled [Contributions of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans to a Healthy Ocean](#). After more than 45 years since the creation of the UNEP Regional Seas Programs, this report aims to showcase the positive impacts of the Regional Seas Conventions and Actions Plans in protecting the marine environment and achieving SDG 14: Life below water. The report is complemented by a series of case studies, highlighting the role of regional seas conventions and action plans in achieving SDGs. There is also a “toolbox” to assist decision makers, policymakers and other stakeholders in the development of various solutions, aiming to support science-based action. In line with this report, UNEP has also launched an explicative video presenting [How countries are cooperating to protect oceans](#).

#### **Developments under the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)**

Following submission of the joint and coordinated Proposal to Designate the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides by all Mediterranean coastal States, along with all Member States of the European Union, and the European Commission, the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) at its 78<sup>th</sup> session (6-10 June 2022) approved the designation of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA) under regulation 14 of Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). The draft amendments to formally designate the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA will be put forward for adoption at the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the IMO's MEPC (12-16 December 2022) and would see the limit on the sulphur content in fuel oil used on board ships operating within the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA set to 0.10% m/m, enter into effect in 2025.

This development follows the adoption by COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (7-10 December 2021, Antalya, Turkey) of a groundbreaking decision on the Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (MED SO<sub>x</sub> ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI. The decision was the result of a regional consultative process lead by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), notably on the preparation a Technical and Feasibility Study as well as further knowledge gathered and further studies, notably additional economic impact evaluation and additional fuel supply and technology analyses, carried out by REMPEC and the Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (PB/RAC), in cooperation with the Mediterranean Pollution Assessment and Control Programme (MED POL), in accordance with the road map adopted by

the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 21) (Naples, Italy, 2-5 December 2019).

#### 10. [Paragraph 221 of United Nations general Assembly resolution 76/72](#)

In March 2022, UNEP FI published its latest Guidance Report on blue economy [Diving Deep: Finance, Ocean Pollution and Coastal Resilience](#). The report is based on the rationale that oceans, while being a large source of “blue” economy, are threatened by the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and nature loss. In this context, the report underlines the positive impact the banking and insurance industry could have on the marine environment, especially by promoting the sustainable transition of ocean-linked industries.

In the spirit of guiding financial institutions in investing in sustainable blue economy, the report focuses on two thematic areas: coastal resilience through infrastructure and nature-based solutions; and waste prevention and management. Both sections present financing opportunities and their environmental and social impacts, including case studies. This toolkit prepared by UNEP FI breaks down the activities to seek, challenge and those to avoid, based on the [Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles](#).

#### 11. [Paragraph 222 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)

##### **Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat is supporting the Dominican Republic in the development of a draft Regulation for the implementation of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). Financing is provided under the project Capacity building Related to Multilateral Environment Agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP MEAs III).

The Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) and the Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport (CIMAB), both Regional Activity Centres (RACs) for the Cartagena Convention’s LBS Protocol, will provide support for the development of guidelines for the classification of waters and establish regional criteria and standards for Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorous (P) loads in domestic and industrial wastewater discharges under the ACP MEAs III and GEF CReW+ projects.

In July 2021, Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention adopted a [Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan](#) which provides a collaborative framework for the progressive reduction of the impacts from excess nutrient loads on priority coastal and marine ecosystems in the Wider Caribbean. Together with the Regional Strategic Action Plan for Governance and Building Climate Resilience in the Water Sector in the Caribbean (RSAP), both strategies form a framework for implementation at the broader regional level and support governments in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation.

A review of the management and regulation of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) in domestic wastewater discharges into the Caribbean Sea was conducted under the GEF CReW+ project. The [report](#) provides recommendations on how new discharge criteria for nutrients and guidelines for domestic wastewater reuse can be incorporated into the Cartagena Convention’s Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS).



## 12. [Paragraph 224 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72](#)

### **UNEA Resolution 5/14, End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument**

During the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, member States adopted [Resolution 5/14, titled End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument](#). Recognizing, *inter alia*, the impacts of plastic pollution on the marine environment, the resolution request the UNEP Executive Director to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) in charge of developing a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. Additionally, the resolution also requested the creation of [an ad-hoc open-ended working group \(OEWG\)](#) to prepare for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to end plastic pollution. The OEWG met for the first time from 30 May to 1 June 2022 in Dakar, Senegal. The meeting led to the adoption of the rules of procedure of the INC and its working schedule over next two years. A few points of the rules of procedure remain to be discussed at the INC's first meeting. The first INC meeting will be held in Uruguay in late November 2022.

### **Updates from the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)**

UNEP and Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) introduced a short film [“\(PLASTIK\)”](#) showcasing the significance of both individual and collective action to combat plastic pollution in the South-East Asian region.

### ***Quad Cities Science Report: Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Initiative, December 2021***

The [Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Initiative](#) is a collaboration between the UNEP North American Regional Office, the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative and University of Georgia's Debris Tracker. The aim of this collaboration was to provide necessary information on plastic waste concentration in key areas around the Quad Cities. The report is based on data collection in different cities along the river, supported by community training programs during the September-October 2021 period. Key findings show 76% of the items logged were plastic.

### **InforMEA Marine Litter Toolkit**

In order to strengthen its objectives as an important online Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements, InforMEA has designed a Marine Litter Toolkit to provide information about plastic pollution to the public. The [Marine Litter Toolkit](#) will cover a range of SDG14 targets. UNEP developed this legal toolkit on plastics pollution prevention to assist legislators and policymakers in the development and strengthening of their regulatory framework with features such as legislation explorer; glossary of terms; interactive guide for legislation on single use plastics; and case studies. The [Marine Litter and Plastics course](#) was launched on June 8 2022.

### **Study on Nutrient Pollution as a Transboundary Challenge in the East Asian Seas**

A desk review on nutrient pollution as a transboundary challenge in the East Asian Seas region has been undertaken in cooperation with the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) of the Global

Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). The study maps existing knowledge on the main sources and impacts of nutrient pollution in the coastal and marine environment as well as prevention and reduction targets and related assessment in COBSEA countries. This information will be discussed by IGM 25 in October 2022 to support development of further actions to address land-based sources of marine pollution and inform the development of new COBSEA Strategic Directions 2023-2027.

### 13. Paragraph 225 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72

#### **Updates from the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)**

Coordinated by UNEP and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), the *Sea circular* project has achieved several new milestones in mainstreaming available data and knowledge around marine debris. A beta version of the [Marine Plastic Research Inventory](#) was launched in November 2021. The database showcases all published research on marine pollution, including scientific publications and research publication from humanities. In April 2022, a regional consultation was held with participation from countries and stakeholders to present the platform and gather feedback and suggestions on the format, content, and accessibility of the database.

COBSEA supports participating countries to address priority issues including land-based marine pollution and marine and coastal planning and management, in line with the COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018-2022 and COBSEA's Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter (RAP MALI).

The RAP MALI recognizes that robust monitoring and assessment are indispensable in identifying marine litter status and trends and its most critical impacts, and to support development, tracking and evaluation of policy and management interventions. Part one of the Twenty-fifth Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM 25) of COBSEA in September 2021 adopted Regional Guidance on Harmonized National Marine Litter Monitoring Programmes to strengthen national monitoring programmes building on existing capacities and promote data comparability in line with global guidance and quality standards. In line with Regional Guidance, in 2022 COBSEA is assisting countries by conducting training on monitoring methods, assessing national baselines and developing national monitoring programmes in partnership with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

In partnership with UN-Habitat and the University of Leeds, with funding from the Government of Sweden under the SEA circular project, COBSEA has assessed waste leakage hotspots and waste flows in 6 cities in Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Viet Nam, and has developed a regional model of plastic pollution emissions. The data collected supports local and national governments to identify priority actions for investment in waste management infrastructure and plastic pollution prevention policies.

Part one of IGM 25 adopted Terms of Reference for the establishment of the East Asian Seas Regional Node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) along three pillars of knowledge management and networking: (1) on policies and good practices, (2) on science and research, and (3) on capacity building. The Regional Node digital platform will be launched in October 2022 at part two of IGM 25 and will be integrated with the Global Digital Platform on Marine Litter of the GPML.

In partnership with the National University of Singapore, with funding from the Government of Sweden under the SEA circular project, COBSEA has develop a regional marine litter research inventory and

database that provides access to over 700 peer reviewed publications and visualizes research data from the COBSEA region. The database provides evidence for informed decision making and aims to bridge the science-policy gap. The research database and a regional research network are part of the East Asian Seas Regional Node of the GPML. The beta version of the database is available at <https://mapla-riv.web.app/>.

Legal and Policy Guidance on Addressing Marine Litter, including a gap analysis and needs assessment of legislative frameworks was prepared by UNEP and COBSEA for Cambodia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The documents were developed based on countries' expression of interest and in consultation with government partners to provide legal guidance on tackling marine litter. A regional scoping study on legal frameworks related to sea-based sources of marine litter was developed to inform possible actions to address respective pollution in line with the RAP MALI. All resources are available on the COBSEA website: [www.unep.org/cobsea/resources](http://www.unep.org/cobsea/resources)

UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and COBSEA, together with the Government of Malaysia, organized the third annual SEA of Solutions partnership event on preventing plastic pollution from 16-18 November 2021. The virtual event with more than 800 participants 62 speakers from 70 countries launched Malaysia's National Marine Litter Policy and Action Plan 2021-2030 developed with technical assistance from COBSEA and identified 10 acceleration solutions for stepping up collective action to end plastic pollution. More information is available at <https://sos2021.sea-circular.org/>.

With funding from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), COBSEA implemented three integrated waste management pilots in remote and island communities to demonstrate and replicate good practices. Locations included the Mersing Islands in Malaysia, partnering with Reef Check Malaysia, and in Untia, Indonesia, partnering with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Indonesia. UNEP/MAP collaborated with the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Partnership (PWP) and actively participated in three working groups emanating from this initiative focusing on prevention, collection and transboundary movement of plastic waste and is leading the work of the subgroup concerned with plastic waste collection, recycling and other recovery, including financing and related markets

#### 14. [Paragraph 226 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat will further its efforts to reduce marine plastic pollution in the region through the recently endorsed Global Environment Facility-funded project '[Reduce marine plastics and plastic pollution in Latin American and Caribbean cities through circular economy](#)'. The project aims to reduce regional marine plastics and plastic pollution by facilitating circular actions at the city-level to accelerate the transition to a circular economy through improved waste management. The project directly responds to national, regional and global marine litter and plastics-related action plans, resolutions and commitments such as the [Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter \(RAPMaLi\) for the Wider Caribbean Region](#).

#### 15. [Paragraph 227 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72](#)

In October 2021, UNEP published a [From Pollution to Solution: a global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution](#), pursuant to UNEA resolution 4/6. The assessment presents the best available techniques and environmental practices, illustrating the magnitude and severity of marine litter and plastic pollution. The report pinpoints the sources of plastic pollution, and in its two last sections,

showcases the monitoring methods and possible solutions in response to this crisis. More specifically, the report showcases the different existing global and regional initiatives that participate in assessing and monitoring plastic pollution at different levels. For instance, UNEP's Global Partnership on Marine Litter is one of several programs that coordinates action against plastic pollution. The argument put forward in the report is the necessity to coordinate the various initiatives and program to achieve a global monitoring of marine litter.

As part of the solutions to the marine litter crisis, the report identifies the existing legal framework that already works towards reducing plastic pollution. However, this framework, dispersed between national, regional and specific international regulations, is lacking single global treaty to reduce marine litter and plastic pollution. Further, the report also underlines the non-legislative solutions available to combat the plastic crisis: business and technological innovations and the made progress in research and development.

The report was launched during an [online event](#) on 21 October 2021, where was discussed the key findings of the report as well as material such as the Digital Platform of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML).

#### **Developments under the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)**

COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention requested UNEP/MAP to promote the sharing of best practices on marine litter management and combating plastic pollution in other international fora, such as the UNEP Global Programme of Action, the UNEP Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and partnerships, such as the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Partnership; and to actively contribute to the work developed in that fora by inter alia sharing and promoting Contracting Parties efforts in combating marine litter, including plastic pollution.

#### **Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat through the ACP MEAs III project will develop a technical information brief on plastics within the Caribbean, focusing on sources, quantities, presence and impacts. The brief aims to better inform the region's negotiators participating in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution as per UNEA-5.2 resolution 5/14.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat provided technical input to a recently published research article entitled [Sources and Leakages of Microplastics in Cruise Ship Wastewater](#) for the Frontiers in Marine Science website. The article highlights the sources of microplastics in cruise ship wastewater and provides recommendations to cruise lines on how to address and mitigate the issue.

#### **16. Paragraph 229 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72**

#### **Developments under the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)**

Within the framework of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, UNEP/MAP through MED POL and SPA/RAC has defined the most pertinent and representative species in the Mediterranean to assess the amount of marine litter ingested by marine species and to measure the rates of entanglement/strangling for marine species.

#### 17. [Paragraph 230 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72](#)

##### **Global Partnership on Marine Litter – Digital Platform**

In February 2022, UNEP and the Global Partnership on Marine Litter implemented Phase 3 (out of 6) of the [Digital Platform](#), which consisted of adding new features to the website, including Data Analysis, Capacity Building and Best Practices. The aim of the platform is to provide up-to-date and accurate information and data on plastic marine pollution and litter and comes in support of the implementation of several UNEA-4 resolutions. In doing so, the Platform enables for multiple stakeholders to connect and collaborate, these include: governments; scientific and technological community and academia; business, industry and private sector; non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations; intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). The Platform is planned to be fully launched in June 2023.

##### **Developments under the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)**

COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention encouraged the work of the Marine Litter Regional Platform to facilitate the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter and further coordinate efforts for a plastic-free and litter-free Mediterranean, and to this aim, requested UNEP/MAP to continue its efforts to strengthening and further expanding this coordinating Platform, by including inter alia the industry, in order to maximize synergies, complementarities, and impacts on the ground with the view to facilitating the achievements of the ambitious objectives of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter in close collaboration with the Contracting Parties.

##### **Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute are co-hosts of the Global Partnership for Marine Litter – Caribbean Node (GPML-Caribe). The following highlights the activities undertaken by the Secretariat through, or in collaboration with, the Node.

A [Regional Harmonized Approach to monitoring Marine Litter](#) along with an [Action Plan](#) were developed through GPML-Caribe and are being piloted in selected countries in the region.

Through the Caribbean Node, the Secretariat and the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) collaborated on a project entitled Reduction of Fishing Gear Loss into the Marine Environment in the Caribbean. The project will provide added incentive to Caribbean Small Island Developing States to minimize the occurrence and impact of fishing gear loss in extreme weather events. It focuses on effectively integrating the GGGI Best Practice Framework into the Caribbean context, and subsequently testing those best practices in the region. A baseline of hotspot locations will be determined and gear removal activities to ground-truth this hotspot analysis will be conducted. Additionally, the availability of in-country port reception facilities will be investigated along with the feasibility of recycling fishing gear locally or regionally. Thus far, activities have

been completed in Jamaica, Grenada and Belize with efforts currently underway to expand to other Caribbean islands and Mexico.

The Secretariat continues to support the annual conferences of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) as co-host of GPML-Caribe. At [GCFI's 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference](#) held in November 2021, the Secretariat moderated a special technical session on marine litter.

In September 2022, the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and GCFI will co-chair a [technical session](#) entitled "*Fostering partnerships to address marine litter in Wider Caribbean Region*" at the 7<sup>th</sup> International Marine Debris Conference ([ZIMDC](#)) in the Republic of Korea. The purpose of the conference is to raise the profile of activities that address marine litter in the Wider Caribbean region and highlight the work being done through the Secretariat on marine litter and plastic pollution.

The GPML-Caribe is supporting the implementation of the [Caribbean Waste Management Action Plan: Priorities and Plans Report \(CWMAP\)](#) which complements the Secretariat's Regional Marine Litter Strategy and Action Plan. The Cartagena Convention Secretariat contributed to the update of this report to identify and address the gaps, key issues and priority actions from the previous report. The document provides a reference for designing and implementing priority actions on waste management for the region, with focus on strategies supported by civil society.

A small grants programme is being developed by GCFI for community-based projects on marine litter prevention. This activity is being funded by the project Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in ACP Countries –Phase III (ACP MEAs III). The community-based interventions are expected to focus on plastic reduction, reuse and recycling as part of the Global Marine Litter Partnership, the Caribbean Node for Marine Litter and the Trash Free International Programme. The community interventions will demonstrate enhanced partnerships between national governments, civil society and the private sector and promote circular economy approaches to waste and plastics management.

#### **18. Paragraph 231 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72**

ACP MEAs 3 Programme also participated in developing a Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) strategy for the Western Indian Ocean region. Nairobi Convention COP10 meeting has requested the Secretariat to finalize this strategy for adoption at COP11.

#### **Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

Saint Lucia is currently developing a Marine Litter/Plastic Reduction Strategy and Action Plan under the ACP MEAs III project and with support from the UNEP Science Division. A National Consultative Workshop to develop a National Source Inventory on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter in Saint Lucia was held in April 2022. The National Source Inventory will provide input for the National Action Plan on marine litter and plastic pollution, which will then be submitted through the appropriate national process for approval and formalization. A high-level meeting is scheduled for July 2022 to present the findings of the National Source Inventory report (including the results of the data collection) and the draft Marine Litter Action Plan.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat contributed to [the Marine Litter Action Plan for the Northeast Pacific 2022 – 2026](#) that was launched virtually in early June 2022. The Secretariat provided expert advice during the development of the Action Plan which was led by MarViva. The Action Plan serves countries in the Central American region, some of which are Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention, as well as to one or more of its three Protocols.

In June 2022, the Government of Dominica, requested the support of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat in the preparation of their National Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan. The Secretariat will engage in further discussions with the government and is evaluating options to finance this activity under the ACP MEAs III project.

Support will be provided to the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Colombia, the British Virgin Islands, Guyana, Suriname, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago, to reduce the flows of plastic waste (mainly packaging) from terrestrial sources into the Caribbean Sea and its coastal areas. This will be done through the [Prevention of Marine Litter in the Caribbean Sea \(PROMAR\)](#) project that is currently under development and financed by the Government of Germany.

#### **19. Paragraph 235 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72**

The Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) and the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027) were adopted by COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (7-10 December 2021, Antalya, Turkey). Further to the adoption of the aforementioned Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), six (6) countries initiated the development of National Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy. In view of the First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (29 November-1 December 2022, Malta), to support government individual and collective efforts all relevant regional stakeholders in the Mediterranean have been invited to contribute to the collaborative, coordinated and collective effort offered by the Strategy.

REMPEC provided technical assistance to develop the national Ballast Water Management Strategy for Morocco, which was delivered in December 2021.

The Amendments to the Annexes to the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol) and the Guidelines for the Conduct of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the Offshore Protocol were adopted by COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (7-10 December 2021, Antalya, Turkey). On Tuesday 30 November 2021, REMPEC organized the online training workshop on “The application of Common Standards and Guidance on the Disposal of Oil and Oily Mixtures and the Use and Disposal of Drilling Fluids and Cuttings”, which were adopted in 2019 by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, in line with the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan.

#### **20. Paragraph 238 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72**

In December 2022, COP22 of the Barcelona Convention adopted the *Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031)*. The new document has a vision to create "A clean and healthy Mediterranean marine and coastal environment with a sustainable and pollution free maritime sector, supported by a rigorous enforcement system and strengthened multi-sectoral cooperation, for the benefit of present and future generations". With this purpose in mind, the new Strategy sets out seven strategic objectives.

#### 21. [Paragraph 245 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72](#)

In November 2021, [Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea \(REMPEC\)](#) (under the Mediterranean Regional Seas Programme) organized the [first online training workshop](#) on "*The application of Common Standards and Guidance on the Disposal of Oil and Oily Mixtures and the Use and Disposal of Drilling Fluids and Cuttings*". The workshop presented the common standards and guidance, adopted in 2019 by the COP to the Barcelona Convention, consistent with the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan. The session gathered thirty Mediterranean state representatives, private sector, and other organizations.

A series of regional and country-level workshops were organized by REMPEC on the Assessment of the Level of Oil Spill Response Planning and Readiness Management for the Central and Eastern Mediterranean countries (from September to November 2021). These workshops provided each country with practical experience on the use of the [Readiness Evaluation Tool for Oil Spills](#) and the [Self-Assessment Tool \(SAT\)](#) for Oiled Wildlife Response.

Under the Caspian Regional Seas Programme, administered by the UNEP Regional Office for Europe (UNEP ROE), the Parties to the Teheran Convention held a High-Level Implementation Meeting under the Aktau Protocol, from 1-3 November 2021. The Meeting was the opportunity to discuss the implementation of the Protocol: especially, the text of Regional Cooperation Plan in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents, the long-term exercises schedule, arrangements and budget of the Aktau Protocol implementation beyond 2021. The Fourth online Caspian Sea ALPHA/BRAVO exercise meeting under the Aktau Protocol was held on March 15 and April 5, 2022. The aim of the exercise is to try-out the procedure in case of oil spills, provide for in the Aktau Protocol. In this exercise, the Russian Federation provided the written report of the oil pollution incident (POLREP) and a request for assistance.

In the Caribbean region, the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean ([RAC REMPEITC-Caribe](#)) will also be organizing, in 2022 and 2023, a series of MARPOL workshops for States of the region, in relation to the implementation of the Regional Oil Spills Protocol. In cooperation with the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC), the Mediterranean Assistant Unit (MAU) managed by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) administered by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in collaboration with the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP), was deployed in Syria, in December 2021. The onsite mission provided expertise to address the incident involving a fuel leakage into the Mediterranean Sea from the Baniyas thermal station, Syria. REMPEC also mobilized expert on claims and compensation, in Tunis from 25 to 29 April 2022, to provide assistance to the Tunisian government in the aftermath of the sinking of the oil tanker, XELO.



REMPEC organized, between September and November 2021, a set of workshops and practical country-specific session on assessment of the level of oil spill response planning and readiness management for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Libya, Monaco, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Turkey. The National Contingency Plan for Bosnia Herzegovina to respond to oil spill was completed and delivered by REMPEC in November 2021. As a follow-up REMPEC initiated the organization of a series of national workshops on oil spill response planning and readiness assessment to be held between June and November 2022, in Adriatic, Central and Eastern Mediterranean countries, namely: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Slovenia, Syria, and Turkey.

#### **Update from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre – Caribe (REMPEITC-Caribe) provides technical support to Contracting Parties (on request) to assess, prepare, adopt, update as well as implement and test national contingency plans and regional or sub-regional agreements/contingency plans, dealing with preparedness for and response to oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) spills from ships, seaports, oil handling facilities and offshore installations.

#### **22. Paragraph 246 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72**

#### **Update from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

In the Caribbean region, the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean ([RAC REMPEITC-Caribe](#)) is helping States plan national oil contingency planning, through a series of Workshops. As of this date, the following countries will benefit from these workshops in 2022: Sint Maarten & Anguilla, Nicaragua, Granada, and Dominican Republic.

Within the framework of the Sub-regional Marine Oil Pollution Contingency Plan between Cyprus, Greece and Israel, the Greek Government organized, in collaboration with REMPEC, a Sub-regional Workshop on “Dispersants, operational usage and effectiveness monitoring” (Piraeus, Greece, 5-6 October 2021). REMPEC initiated the preparation of the Sub regional workshop on Oiled Shoreline Assessment Technics (SCAT) and Third preparatory Meeting of the National Operational Authorities responsible of the Sub regional Contingency Plan (Israel, 20-22 September 2022). REMPEC also launched the preparation of the Sub regional Workshop on Liability and Compensation for oil pollution damage (Tunis, Tunisia, 18-20 October 2022) to be attended by representatives from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat, through REMPEITC-Caribe, continues to partner with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to build capacity among Contracting Parties to reduce the negative impacts of oil spills through the development and adoption of national oil spills contingency plans.

#### **23. Paragraph 249 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72**

On 15 February 2022, UNEP hosted the virtual Fifth intergovernmental review meeting on the implementation of the Global Programme of Action. The meeting was the opportunity to present progress on the implementation of the GPA for the 2019-2021 period. The Meeting further [decided to no longer](#)

[hold any sessions of the periodic Intergovernmental Review Meeting](#), noting that UNEA can continue to provide guidance on priorities and actions to address marine pollution from land-based activities.

#### **24. Paragraph 250 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72**

##### **Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat is working to better incorporate Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management into the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. Contracting Parties to the Convention's Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) are addressing freshwater management under one of the subgroups of their Open-Ended Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment. At their 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties in July 2021, the Parties also reviewed a [technical paper](#), developed under GEF CReW+, on the potential impact of point and diffuse sources of freshwater discharges from desalination plants on estuarine, coastal and marine environments, and the need for specific guidelines for such discharges.

The Institute of Marine Affairs and the Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport will conduct an analysis to inform the development of a strategy or protocol on the management of freshwater resources under the Cartagena Convention.

#### **25. Paragraph 251 of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72**

##### **UNEA Resolution 5/2, "Sustainable Nitrogen Management"**

The resolution reaffirms the significant impacts of nutrients such as nitrogen on biodiversity, marine environments, and ecosystems. The resolution encourages all States to continue efforts to limit if not significantly reduce the levels of nitrogen through national actions plans, inter alia. Further, the resolution requests the Secretariat to assist states in developing national action plans and reaching their goals. Especially, Member States are invited to collaborate with UNEP on the issue, by appointing national focal points to the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen. Pursuant to the same resolution, UNEP will be producing a report on the implementation of resolution 4/14 to be presented at the 159<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, in 2022.

##### **Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

Through financing from the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management, Jamaica and Barbados, both Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention, are benefitting from an Economic Valuation Pilot Project. Two case studies will be developed to propose options for the improvement of nutrient use efficiency, as well as quantify the multiple costs and benefits of meeting the nutrient management targets for food security, marine and freshwater ecosystems, terrestrial ecosystems, the mitigation of greenhouse gases and other climate threats, and the improvement of human health.

In July 2022, a Regional Workshop on Index of Coastal Eutrophication and Harmful Algal Blooms, will be organized by the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) with support from the Centre of Research and

Environmental Management of Transport (CIMAB). The workshop aims to raise awareness of the science, trends, and the need to prioritize work for reducing nutrient pollution and provide updates on the development of an Indicator for Coastal Eutrophication Potential (ICEP), including the capacities and new policies that may be needed to facilitate future reporting on this indicator.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat's updated [White Paper on Sargassum](#) provides a situational analysis of the sargassum influx in the Caribbean, including a review of its impacts on human well-being, coastal and marine-based activities, livelihoods and the marine environment.

26. [Paragraph 259 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)

**Update from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

On 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the [Government of Nicaragua ratified](#) the Cartagena Convention's Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW), becoming the 18<sup>th</sup> Contracting Party to that Protocol.

27. [Paragraph 270 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)

**Update from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

Small grants will be provided to eligible applicants in the Wider Caribbean Region to support the management of marine protected areas. The grants will incentivize new nominations and assist those that are already inscribed on the list of MPAs under the Cartagena Convention's Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol. Grants will be funded by the project Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in ACP Countries –Phase III (ACP MEAs III).

28. [Paragraph 272 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)

**Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

In July 2021, the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Cartagena Convention's Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol approved the inclusion of the [Cotubanama National Park](#), proposed by the Government of the Dominican Republic, as a marine protected area under the SPAW Protocol.

The [Caribbean Marine Protected Area Network and Forum \(CaMPAM\)](#) has been restructured and expanded to include information on 1069 marine and coastal marine protected areas (MPAs) from 44 countries throughout the Wider Caribbean.

The Secretariat is working to establish a SPAW Marine Protected Areas Networking Group to lead the inter-regional network of MPAs.

29. [Paragraph 281 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)

**Developments under the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)**

UNEP/MAP, supported by its Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), developed in 2021 through a series of consultations and workshops, a Post-2020 Regional Strategy for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the Mediterranean. This Strategy was adopted by COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention (Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021), that called upon the Contracting Parties to take effective measures to implement the Post-2020 Regional Strategy, thus enhancing the implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean region.

### 30. [Paragraph 307 of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/72](#)

In May 2022, the Seychelles hosted the 22<sup>nd</sup> Global meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, in a hybrid format. The Meeting was the opportunity to launch the [Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2022 - 2025](#). The new strategy focuses, *inter alia*, on assessment, information, and knowledge sharing, as well as science-policy dialogue, all while mainstreaming the Regional Seas Programme. It aims at more resilient, diverse, and productive marine ecosystems.

In addition, UNEP participated in curating the GEO-6 Technical Summary. The summary distills the science and data in the GEO-6 report to make it more accessible to students and scientists, and more useful for teaching and learning at the university level. Several sections of the report focus on ocean-science, especially problems related to coasts and ocean, freshwater, biodiversity.

### 31. [Paragraph 314 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)

#### **Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

The Cartagena Convention recognizes the importance of environmental monitoring and assessment, and the Secretariat has undertaken various efforts to support its Contracting Parties in fulfilling this obligation and making informed decisions based on scientific data. The [State of the Cartagena Convention Area report](#) (SOCAR) and the [State of Nearshore Marine Habitats](#) (SoMH) report are two landmark publications developed to support environmental monitoring and responsive actions by governments and stakeholders in the Wider Caribbean to mitigate threats to the marine environment. The SOCAR report provides a quantitative baseline for monitoring and assessing the state of the marine environment with respect to land-based pollution and supports governments in the region in assessing progress towards relevant goals and targets, such as the Sustainable Development Goals. The SoMH report highlights the status and trends of coral reefs, mangrove forests and seagrass beds, and identifies the drivers and pressures, summarises the interventions to address those pressures, identifies gaps in response, identifies emerging challenges, and proposes actions to improve the management of the target habitats.

The SOCAR assessment helped to inform the development of the [Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan \(RNPRSAP\)](#). The State of Nearshore Marine Habitats report provides background information and context for the [Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021 – 2030 \(RSAP\)](#). The RSAP provides a framework for strategic interventions by Contracting Parties to strengthen the resilience of vital nearshore marine habitats as part of their obligations under the Cartagena Convention.

Summaries of the SOCAR report, SoMH report and its RSAP were developed for target groups to highlight their important role in addressing marine pollution and protecting marine biodiversity, and to encourage their participation in implementing the recommended actions in these publications. Summaries of the State of the Convention Area report are available for [policy makers](#), [civil society](#) and the [private sector](#). A combined summary of the SOCAR and State of Nearshore Marine Habitat reports was also developed, along with summaries of the RSAP for [policy makers](#), [civil society](#) and [private sector](#).

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat will be developing further assessments on the state of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean to improve data and information management on marine pollution and marine biodiversity. This effort is expected to build on the Secretariat's SOCAR and SoMH reports. Data generated from the existing reports are being incorporated into a regional pilot of the World Environment Situation Room. This regional platform will also facilitate the compilation of information from national monitoring and assessment programmes, strengthen science-policy linkages, support regional reporting on international agreements, and support the monitoring of the Secretariat's Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan, and Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021 – 2030. The platform is being developed for the Secretariat by the University of Geneva.

A Water Information Management System is being developed to facilitate access to and the dissemination of water-related data. The six beneficiary countries - Costa Rica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago – will also improve their capacity to analyse and manage spatial water-related data. The system is being developed by the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health.

### **32. Paragraph 329 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72**

#### **Updates from the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)**

The Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) is a regional intergovernmental policy forum and the sole decision-making body for the Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the East Asian Seas Region (the East Asian Seas Action Plan). COBSEA supports the nine participating countries (Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Viet Nam) in the development and protection of the marine environment and coastal areas of East Asian Seas. The COBSEA Secretariat is hosted by Thailand and administered by UN Environment Programme Ecosystems Division. COBSEA supports participating countries to address priority issues including land based marine pollution and marine and coastal planning and management, in line with the COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018-2022 and Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI). Current COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018-2022 are being evaluated and recommendations for development of new Strategic Directions 2023-2027 will be prepared for consideration by IGM 25 in October 2022.

Part one of Twenty-fifth Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM 25) held in September 2021 made progress toward implementing the RAP MALI, including the adoption of: a biennial workplan 2021-2022 for implementation of the RAP MALI, Regional Guidance on Harmonized National Marine Litter Monitoring Programmes, and Terms of Reference of the East Asian Seas Regional Node of the Global Partnership on

Marine Litter (GPML). The Third Meeting of the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter (WGML) held in June 2021 in preparation for the IGM established an Expert Group on Monitoring and encouraged the development of two marine litter projects in the pipeline in partnership with the German Development Cooperation Agency GIZ and the Asian Development Bank (planned to commence from October 2022). The Fourth Meeting of the WGML and Part Two of IGM 25 will take place in October 2022.

By request of the IGM 24, the COBSEA Secretariat in collaboration with the Working Group on Marine Litter and regional partners, is developing the East Asian Seas Regional Node of the GPML. Part one of IGM 25 adopted Terms of Reference for the establishment of the East Asian Seas Regional Node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) along three pillars of knowledge management and networking: (1) on policies and good practices, (2) on science and research, and (3) on capacity building, toward delivery of the RAP MALI. The Regional Node digital platform will be launched in October 2022 at part two of IGM 25 and will be integrated with the Global Digital Platform on Marine Litter of the GPML.

In line with the COBSEA RAP MALI and Regional Guidance adopted by IGM 25, COBSEA is working in partnership with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to strengthen and harmonize national marine litter monitoring programmes toward greater data comparability. Support in 2022 includes national trainings on monitoring, assessment of national baselines of marine litter in the environment, as well as technical assistance to develop national monitoring programmes. Support is provided with funding from the Government of Sweden under the SEA circular project implemented jointly with the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Following the full delivery on COBSEA's Voluntary Commitment made at the UN Ocean Conference in 2017 ([#OceanAction15986](#)), the COBSEA Secretariat has submitted a new Voluntary Commitment to the second UN Ocean Conference with country input. COBSEA commits to strengthening implementation, monitoring and reporting on ocean-related SDGs in East Asian Seas including the implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI).

Pursuant to the COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018-2022, an Outlook on COBSEA follow-up and review of ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was prepared to guide COBSEA in supporting tracking and implementation of relevant ocean-related SDGs and targets, for consideration by part two of IGM 25.

A review of national and regional legal and policy MCSP frameworks is being undertaken through desktop research and consultation with COBSEA countries. The review will identify recommendations on enabling conditions for wider use of MCSP in marine and coastal ecosystem-based management and development. Several workshops have been undertaken with COBSEA countries to review the content of the study. COBSEA is currently finalizing the report for publication in 2022.

A desk study on the situation of marine protected areas (MPA) in the East Asian Seas was conducted at the end of 2021 to the beginning of 2022. The content of the desk study was presented in a webinar to the COBSEA Participating Countries on February 2022 (more information can be found here: [Webinar on COBSEA Network of Marine Protected Areas \(MPAs\)](#)). Main recommendations from the desk study include developing a working group on MPA and the establishment of a region-wide MPA Network. The webinar also provided an opportunity to discuss UNEP's strategy and efforts on marine protected areas with key personnel from the COBSEA countries.

A desk review on nutrient pollution as a transboundary challenge in the East Asian Seas region has been carried out through desk research and country consultation in cooperation with the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). The review compiles available information on the main sources and impacts of nutrient pollution in the coastal and marine environment; prevention and reduction commitments, targets and measures; and related monitoring and assessment in COBSEA countries. This information can support development of further actions addressing land-based sources of marine pollution and may be used by COBSEA countries to inform development and implementation of actions addressing nutrient pollution. The report will inform discussions by IGM 25 and development of actions under the new Strategic Directions 2023-2027.

### **33. [Paragraph 332 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)**

#### **Developments under the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)**

With the goal to further enhance the conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources, the protection and preservation of the marine environment and the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean, UNEP/MAP, supported by its Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), developed in 2020-2021 the Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO), based on a full bottom-up Barcelona Convention Contracting Parties' supported assessment of the status of Mediterranean marine and coastal biodiversity, including consultations and workshops, which resulted in the identification of key gaps, challenges and priorities for action.

This process was oriented from the outset to integrate it as much as possible with the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) following the relevant Decision of COP 21 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols requesting the preparation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO and to harmonize it with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and to align it with the Sustainable Development Goals. The approach of harmonization has been fully followed during all the stages of elaboration of the Post-2020 SAPBIO, taking however into account the specificities of the natural, social, economic, capacity needs and political contexts of the countries bordering the Mediterranean. The objective was to achieve a Post-2020 SAPBIO that is shaped according to the needs of the region, including leveraging capacities, while being in line with the priorities and orientations adopted at global level for the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity. This Post-2020 SAPBIO was adopted by COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021).

### **34. [Paragraph 333 of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72](#)**

#### **Updates from the Caribbean Environment Programme and Cartagena Convention Secretariat**

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat's 2021-2022 work plan encourages sustained partnerships with other Regional Seas Programmes, government institutions, non-governmental organizations, the academic, scientific and research communities, civil society, as well as the private sector to develop and implement

regional initiatives that promote the sustainable conservation and management of the Caribbean Seas's coastal and marine resources.

The [2021-2030 Regional Strategy for the Caribbean Environment Programme \(CEP\)](#) will serve as a basis for the further development and implementation of approaches that focus on ocean-based economies and support improved regional ocean governance, enhanced partnerships, and action.

Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with the Secretariat of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR), Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), the Institute of Marine and Coastal Research (INVEMAR), The Ocean Foundation, and a draft MOU with the International Whaling Commission is being finalized. A Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the Mesoamerican Reef Fund was extended to May 2026.

The Secretariat continues to undertake cooperation initiatives through its Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and with financial support through projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and non-GEF funded projects.

The Secretariat is supporting the establishment of a Coordinating Mechanism (CM) and Sustainable Financing Plan (SFP) for ocean governance in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) region. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by participating agencies, including UNEP, and Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention have been requested to provide feedback on the possibility of the Mechanism being hosted by the Secretariat.

The GEF IWEco project will be developing a Regional Environmental Laboratory Network to guide and coordinate laboratory strengthening activities within the Caribbean. The network will be composed of environmental laboratory heads and their deputies. The idea for the network was developed following the GEF IWEco project's first regional training to strengthen the capacity of laboratories to perform environmental quality monitoring.