



Inputs to the Secretary-General's Annual Report to the General Assembly on the Ocean and Law of the Sea

Summary

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the global environmental authority and sets environmental agenda across the world. As such, it has taken initiative to support Member States to implement ecosystem-based management of marine and coastal ecosystems. UNEP has been implementing its work through developing strong partnership with a diverse organisations and stakeholders including other UN agencies, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sectors.

UNEP is undertaking various projects ranging from normative work strengthening the science-policy interface to practical demonstration of policy and management options on the ground. Tangible progresses have been demonstrated. For example, the Green Fins Initiatives were developed for environmental stewardship in the dive tourism industry. More than 400 diving and snorkelling operators across six countries in Asia have joined the initiative. On the other hand, Abidjan Convention has established Regional Coordination Centre for Marine Pollution Emergency. The centre will be operational by the end of 2015 and it will coordinate activities to mitigate transboundary marine pollution across the 22 coastal countries under the convention's jurisdiction. UNEP also works in partnership with the Institute of Advanced Sustainability Studies and Institut du developement durable et des relations internationales (IDDRI) and has launched the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance. Moreover, UNEP is continuing to develop decision-support, advice and national capacity for implementing ecosystem-based management of oceans and coast, particularly pursuing an integrated, area-based approach. As part of the initial work-programme of the partnership, it started assisting the Abidjan Convention in establishing its working group to study issues related to biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. One of the most encouraging recent accomplishments is that UNEP GPA's work contributed to the G7 Summit in June 2015. Consequently, the issues of marine litter were addressed in the Leader's Declaration, including its mitigation works through Regional Seas Programmes. At regional level, various activities have been developed to deal with marine litter. For example, NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter is being implemented in cooperation with central and local governments in the NOWPAP member states as well as NGOs. In 2013, the Mediterranean Region adopted the first legally binding Regional Plan on Marine Litter in the framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention. On the other hand, the Wider Caribbean Region has revised its Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management, which underpins future Marine Litter projects. As demonstrated across its activities, UNEP continues implementing the resolution 69/245 emphasizing the importance of marine environment.



1. Introduction

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has set its mandate to be the global environmental authority and has continued setting environmental agenda across the world. With regards to ocean, UNEP has been promoting sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems through ecosystem-based management. UNEP primarily deals with marine issues through Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch (MCEB) under Division of Environmental Policy Implementation while Division of Environmental Law and Convention handles legal issues related with ocean. MCEB consists of The Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Unit, The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), The GEF-International Waters Unit, The Coral Reef Partnership, Programme Small Island Development States (SIDS) and Regional Seas Coordination. The Regional Seas Programme coordinates eighteen Regional Seas established across the world, of which six are directly administered by UNEP. The six Regional Seas are: Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention), East Asian Seas, Eastern Africa Region (Nairobi Convention), Mediterranean Region (UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention), North-West Pacific Region and Western African Region (Abidjan Convention). Throughout the coordination of various projects and programs across the world, UNEP has made progresses in implementing UNEP's Marine and Coastal Strategies and has continued providing supports for improving ocean governance as well as management of marine and coastal ecosystems. In this way, UNEP continues implementing the resolution 69/245. It is important to note that UNEP is also actively following up UNGA resolution 68/309 of 10 September 2014 regarding the protection and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resource for sustainable development, including provision of technical input to the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, with regards to issues and indicator development relevant to ocean-related SDG targets.

This report summarizes the progress of activities with regard to the ocean and Law of the Sea within the coordination of UNEP with reference to paragraphs of the resolution 69/245. It highlights activities from UNEP Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Unit, Global Coral Reef Partnership, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), Abidjan Convention, Barcelona Convention, Cartagena Convention, Nairobi Convention and Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP).

2. Progress to date

2.1 Marine environment and marine resources (Chapter IX of the resolution 69/245)

Referring to paragraph 167 (impact of climate change on marine ecosystems) and 239 (improve knowledge on ocean) of the resolution 69/245, work is ongoing in the framework of UNEP/MAP



Barcelona Convention, towards the development of a Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework aiming to provide a regional approach in coordinating and assisting policy makers and stakeholders at all levels across the Mediterranean to (i) promote the right enabling environment for mainstreaming adaptation in national and local planning; (ii) promote and exchange best practices and low-regret measures; (iii) promote leveraging of necessary funding; and (iv) exchange and access best available data, knowledge, assessments and tools on adaptation, in order to increase the resilience of the Mediterranean marine and coastal natural and socioeconomic systems to the impacts of climate change¹. UNEP is also developing a decision-support framework that will enable planners select, develop and implement appropriate policies and measures for coastal ecosystem-based adaptation. The framework is being piloted for Small Island Development States through collaboration with the European Commission and national partners.

Referring to paragraph 181 of resolution 64/245 (better understanding of marine debris), the Resolution 1/6 on marine plastic debris and microplastics adopted by member states for a study on the impacts of marine plastics and microplastics is gaining significant attention, including the involvement of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environment Pollution (GESAMP). UNEP's work fed into the G7 Summit in June 2015. As a result, the issue of marine litter was included in the Leader's Declaration. The social and economic impacts of marine debris were elaborated for the G7 to inform leaders. Moreover, UNEP and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Germany, are now collaborating in the preparation of a global study on marine litter in the context of the G7

Referring to paragraph 183 (develop partnership with civil society on marine debris), NOWPAP has promoted International Coastal Clean-up (ICC) through annual NOWPAP ICC campaigns and workshops aiming to raise public awareness and to share best practices in marine litter management.

Referring to paragraph 184 (integrating issues of marine debris into waste management strategies), NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter is being implemented in cooperation with central and local governments in the NOWPAP member states as well as NGOs. NOWPAP has published several reports and brochures highlighting negative impacts of marine litter as well as best practices in addressing land-based and sea-based sources of marine litter. NOWPAP is also actively participating in the Global Partnership on Waste Management (GPWM) and Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) hosting the North West Pacific regional node of the GPML since 2014.

Referring to paragraph 190 (implement the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based activities), in 2013 the Mediterranean

¹ The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, at their 18th Meeting, in December 2013, supports by Decision IG. 21/17 the preparation of a Climate Change Adaptation Framework, to be reviewed by MCSDD and submitted for consideration to the 19th Meeting of the Contracting Parties in February 2016.



Region adopted a Regional Plan on Marine Litter in the framework of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention LBS Protocol², containing legally binding measures and timetables for their implementation in order to minimize and reduce the generation and impact of marine litter.³ At the Wider Caribbean Region, the Regional Action Plan on Marine litter management was revised and the new plan will form the basis for future Marine Litter projects in the region. The implementation of projects is facilitated through its four Regional Activity Centres on oil spills (in Curacao), land-based pollution (in Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago) and on biodiversity conservation (in Guadeloupe, France).

Referring to paragraph 190 (pollution load of the oceans emanates from land-based activities), the wastewater partnership continues to promote the view that wastewater is indeed a resource and not necessarily a problem with potential benefits socially and economically to community development as well as improving coastal water quality. A recent decision presented to the Nairobi Convention Conference of Parties highlighted the importance of this issue on coastal environments in the Southern and eastern African region. At the regional level, with the support from UNEP/GPA, the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) has developed 'Regional Guidelines On Wastewater Management in Coastal Cities on the Red Sea And Gulf Of Aden', which aim to help improve wastewater management and reduce the pollution loads in the coastal cities of the PERSGA region.

In the Wider Caribbean Region, there has been an increased awareness in addressing wastewater management issues at ministerial levels through the engagement of Ministers of Environment in High Level Sessions. National policies, legislation and regulations on wastewater management are updated such as in Guyana, Antigua and St. Lucia. Wastewater Baseline Assessments was also conducted. Furthermore, over 400 persons were trained in various aspects of wastewater management.

In addition, the Wider Caribbean Region executed the GEF 20 million USD Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CRew) and the preparation of the full sized 21 million USD project proposal for Implementing Integrated Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean SIDS (IWEco) project. The Secretariat also supported the development and implementation of other GEF funded projects in the Wider Caribbean Region including the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Project (CLME) and CLME+, the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloBallast Partnership Project which benefited Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

² Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources

³ The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, at their 18th Meeting, in December 2013, adopted by Decision IG. 21/7 a Marine Litter Regional Plan, which entered into force on the 8th of July 2014. Specific marine litter regional reduction target will be submitted for adoption to the 19th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in February 2016.



Referring to paragraph 191 (reduce nutrient pollution), UNEP GPA has highlighted both positive and negative impacts of nutrient use, on social, economic and environmental issues, ranging from food security to eutrophication of marine and coastal waters. Under the GEF-Global Nutrient Cycling (GNC) Project, being executed by the GPA, collaborations are ongoing with IOC/UNESCO, the University of Utrecht and Washington State University in the generation of scientific knowledge on the influences of nutrient loading into the marine environment. This is further supported by watershed-based nutrient load and impact modelling applications for the Manila Bay watershed, being undertaken in collaboration with the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), the University of the Philippines and the Laguna Lake Development Authority. A collection of best practices for nutrient management based on the lessons learnt from various project components is going to be further refined with inputs from the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM).

In addition, the Abidjan Convention is taking action to address the infestation of the West Africa coast by brown sea weeds *Sargassum*. Recently significant amount of sea weeds have been washed ashore along the West African Coast. The sea grass disrupts local fishery as well as tourism and thus Abidjan Convention Secretariat will keep providing technical supports for the member states to deal with the issue.

Referring to paragraph 208 (oil spill), the Abidjan Convention recognises that oil spills form one of the many elements of environmental security that presents danger to the member states of the Abidjan Convention, given the present exploration and drilling activities in the Gulf of Guinea and beyond. In this regard, the Convention Secretariat has held symposia on environmental security co-sponsored by UNEP and the United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM). Furthermore, in recognition of the need to be pro-active in the face of oil spills, the Abidjan Convention Secretariat has held a number of technical meetings to draft regional environmental standards for the exploration and exploitation of offshore oil and gas in West, Central and Southern Africa. This document will be the first environmental standard in Africa setting regional standards to regulate offshore oil and gas activities. The draft will be tabled at its next Conference of Parties due in 2017.

Referring to paragraph 200 (application of ecosystem approach) and 202 (encourage incorporation of ecosystem approach), UNEP, in collaboration with a diverse range of partners, is assisting Member States in applying ecosystem-based management for sustainable and resilient oceans and coasts through new practical approaches and capacity building. Through the initiative, “*Marine Spatial Planning in Practice*”, new decision-support tools include operational guidance on spatial planning for integrated management in different ecological, social and economic settings. Cross-sectoral spatial planning is facilitated by linking strategic environmental assessment and ecosystem service valuations in trade-off analysis and spatial management scenarios; and management implementation is guided by practical markers and indicators to assess longer-term outcomes and impacts of spatial planning and area-based management measures. By addressing multiple drivers and cumulative human impacts on coastal



and marine areas, integrated spatial planning supports management for coastal resilience and human adaptive capacity underpinning both ecosystem-based mitigation ('blue carbon'), adaption (EBA) and disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR). New tools are tested and disseminated through the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans via local demonstration projects, regional training and global guidance and policy advice. A decision-support framework for coastal ecosystem-based adaptation is being piloted for Small Island Development States through collaboration with the European Commission and national partners. A new online platform is being initiated to share and learn from practical spatial planning and management experiences.

The ecosystem approach has also been strengthened at regional level. Ecosystem approach has been firmly implemented as a guiding principle for the overall work of UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention. The principle has been also implemented in practical terms, by agreeing on region-wide common Ecological Objectives, Indicators and Targets, which serve as a basis for an Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme, covering for the first time on a regional level monitoring and assessment of biodiversity, non-indigenous species, pollution, marine litter, coast and hydrography, in an integrated manner⁴.

On the other hand, the Abidjan Convention in partnership with GRID-Arendal and UNEP is examining cooperation in the development and implementation of integrated ecosystem-based management of marine and coastal resources in the Convention area. In this respect, training workshops are being prepared for national planners, technical personnel, experts and managers on ecosystem-based management approaches, spatial planning tools, mapping of critical coastal and marine habitats, and transboundary ecosystems. The organizations are also preparing a similar workshop for policymakers and managers.

2.2 Marine biodiversity (Chapter X of the resolution 69/245)

Referring to paragraph 174 (invasive species) and 201 (enable sustainable use of marine ecosystems and maintain marine biodiversity), NOWPAP experts are implementing projects focusing on major threats to marine and coastal biodiversity: eutrophication, destruction of coastal habitats and introduction of alien invasive species.

Referring to paragraph 174 (invasive species) and 233 (vulnerability of coral reefs), the Wider Caribbean Region adopted a regional strategy for lionfish control and best practices were widely implemented. The regional strategy incorporated recommendations from the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW Protocol) in relation to strengthening regional coral reef monitoring and

⁴ The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, by Decision IG. 21/3, agreed on an integrated list of Ecological Objectives, indicators, Good Environmental Status descriptions and targets. An Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme, as a follow-up to Decision IG.21/3, covering biodiversity, non-indigenous species, pollution and litter, coast and hydrography in an integrated manner, based on region-wide common indicators, will be submitted for adoption to the 19th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in February 2016.



implementation of the "ICRI Regional Strategy for the Control of Invasive Lionfish in the Wider Caribbean".

Referring to paragraph 201 (enable sustainable use of marine ecosystems and maintain marine biodiversity), firstly, UNEP Global Coral Reef Partnership has developed the Green Fins initiative, a public private partnership for environmental stewardship in the dive tourism industry. The initiative was established by UNEP and Reef-World Foundation to provide code of conduct to mitigate negative environmental impacts from tourism. In 2014 Green Fins was introduced to two additional countries and the total number of membership is now over 400 diving and snorkelling operators across six countries in Asia. The members continuously improve their business practices to mitigate negative environmental impacts. A comprehensive Green Fins Toolbox of guidance materials and tools is being developed to facilitate further replication. Secondly, in August 2014, the Abidjan Convention held talks with the Wadden Sea Secretariat on the possibility of involving the Abidjan Convention Secretariat in the East Atlantic Flyway project that links Norway, the Netherlands-German Wadden Sea to the West African Atlantic coast nations of Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau, through to South Africa. The Flyway project aims to improve marine and coastal ecosystem management and strengthen cooperation with other countries for the conservation of migratory birds, especially along the East Atlantic Flyway. The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative says, "On average 10 [million] to 12 million birds use the Wadden Sea each year on migration between their northern breeding grounds and their wintering areas in Europe, Africa and even further afield." Thirdly, the Wider Caribbean Region has applied marine spatial planning for scenario building for the transboundary management of marine mammals.

Referring to paragraph 211 (sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction), UNEP together with the Institute of Advanced Sustainability Studies and Institut du développement durable et des relations internationales (IDDRI), launched the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance, and is calling for participation of a wider range of international, regional intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and research institutions. As part of the initial work-programme of the Partnership, it started assisting the Abidjan Convention in establishing its working group to study issues related to biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Referring to paragraph 227 (identification of marine areas that may require protection), NOWPAP is conducting projects on sea grass and seaweed habitat mapping and assessment of the status of threatened and endangered marine and coastal species in the region.

Referring to paragraph 233 (conserving mangrove ecosystems), the Abidjan Convention is preparing a draft protocols. The draft deals with transformation of the existing sub-regional charter on mangrove management into an additional protocol of the Abidjan Convention. This draft should be ready by the end of 2015 and will be submitted for endorsement by the next Conference of Parties. Abidjan Convention also had initial talks with GRID-Arendal's "Blue Carbon" team on the UNEP-conducted project to study and document the carbon sequestration



and storage capacity of mangroves in Cameroon, Gabon, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The study argues strongly for the inclusion of mangroves in national and regional programmes to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD or REDD+), and it suggests a number of activities that could improve mangrove conservation and management in those countries.

Referring to paragraph 233 (vulnerability of coral reef), Global Coral Reef Partnership is preparing guidelines on use of resilience indicators and assessments to support spatial as well as sectoral planning in coral reef areas, in collaboration with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other partners. This also encompasses development of datasets on future climate change exposure scenarios at a spatial scale that enables better prioritization of reef management actions. In addition, Global Coral Reef Partnership is preparing a report on mesophotic reefs and their role in supporting resilience of shallow reef habitat, in collaboration with GRID-Arendal. A science to policy brief on wastewater pollution on coral reefs, prepared through collaboration with the Global Wastewater Initiative, will also be launched in the third quarter of 2015.

Referring to paragraph 233 (vulnerability of coral reef) and 236 (mainstreaming coral reef management), Global Coral Reef Partnership initiated a demonstration project in Barbados on the use of economic instruments to finance reef management, through establishment of a marine managed area, development of a public private partnership agreement, and a payment for ecosystem services scheme. This will support development of guidance on use of economic instruments based on the ecosystem services provided by coral reefs.

Referring to paragraph 233 (vulnerability of coral reef) and 239 (improve knowledge on ocean), the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) report *Status and Trends of Caribbean Coral Reefs: 1970-2012* was launched in 2014. Based on this report, recommended standard indicators and methods for coral reef monitoring in the Wider Caribbean have been developed. The application of these standards in national programmes is supported through the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife of the Caribbean Environment Programme. Drawing on this experience, a regional GCRMN reporting process has been initiated in the Western Indian Ocean through the Indian Ocean Commission and Nairobi Convention.

2.3 Marine science (Chapter XI) and Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (Chapter XII of the resolution 69/245)

Referring to paragraph 239 (improve knowledge on ocean), the Wider Caribbean Region is developing the first State of the Convention Area Report (SOCAR) in order to improve understanding and knowledge of the status of the region. Furthermore, recent publications



produced under the auspices of GPA global partnerships (e.g. “Plastics in cosmetics”; “Economic valuation of wastewater”) continue to translate marine science into language for policy-makers.

Referring to paragraph 239 (improve knowledge on ocean) and 253 (regular scientific assessment), the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of Marine and Coastal and Environment of the Western Indian ocean Region in collaboration with the Government of Mozambique and the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations (UN/OLA/DOALOS) organized capacity building workshops for National Focal Points of the Nairobi Convention and selected scientists from the region in August and December 2012 in Maputo, Mozambique. The aim of the workshops was to provide a background to the Regular Process; improve skills and knowledge for conducting integrated assessments of the state of coastal and marine environment; and to introduce a uniform assessment methodology. As an outcome of the training the Nairobi Convention has prepared a Regional State of the Coast Report (RSOCR) which responds to the requirements of the Nairobi Convention and contributes to the United Nations-led production of the World Ocean Assessment (WOA) reports as well as to other global and regional processes, such as the Environment Outlooks coordinated by UNEP. The RSOCR aims to integrate the socio-economic and ecological systems of the WIO region by using a uniform methodology based on the Opportunities Framework and the DPSIR (Drivers, Pressures, Status, Impacts, and Responses) approach. The RSOCR’s approach has been adapted from the WOA framework. However, the content and organization of the concluding chapters are based on the distinct needs of the WIO region. The political process and mandate was led by the Contracting Parties and their National Focal Points to the Nairobi Convention, and the technical process was guided by the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association and involved a representative set of scientists with broad experience in the region.

The RSOCR’s main objectives are to i) provide a comprehensive baseline, ii) highlight main opportunities, iii) describe successes and challenges, iv) identify capacity building needs, v) identify knowledge gaps, and vi) propose policy options. The RSOCR was launched at 8th Conference of parties meeting on 22 June 2015. The online report can be down loaded at: http://www.unep.org/NairobiConvention/Publications/Regional_State_of_Coast_Report_for_the_Western_Indian_Ocean.asp

2.4 Coordination and cooperation (Chapter XV)

Referring to paragraph 300 (strengthen coordination), Barcelona convention has continue making efforts to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development, demonstrating at the regional level through the revision of the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy



as a follow-up to the “*the future we want*” international commitments⁵. NOWPAP has also organized a regional workshop to discuss Ecological Quality Objectives for the NOWPAP region to develop a common regional vision.

On the other hand, Abidjan Convention established the Regional Coordination Centre for Marine Pollution Emergency, marking one of the milestones in the recent achievements of the Abidjan Convention. On 10 July 2014, Nigeria government was formally notified the approval to host the centre, following a decision taken at the Convention’s 11th Conference of Parties four months earlier. The centre, headquartered in the building of the Nigerian Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency, should be operational in 2015 and will coordinate activity against transboundary marine pollution across the 22 coastal countries under the convention’s jurisdiction. The centre’s field operational arm will be in Port Harcourt.

Abidjan Convention tries to use principle of environmental security to strengthen its coordination. While a single agreed definition of environmental security does not exist, the concept encapsulates environmental occurrences that threaten individuals, communities or nations or that could lead to conflict. Along the marine and coastal space of West, Central and Southern Africa, application of the environmental security principle would protect human and marine life, as well as coastal habitats. Implications of climate change on international security and water security, waste management, contaminated land assessment, clean-up of mining activities, and environmental considerations during military peacekeeping operations are all aspects that fall into the category of environmental security the Abidjan Convention is targeting.

In order to strengthen institutional capacity of Abidjan Convention member states on sustainable tourism development, the Convention Secretariat has begun to make contacts with the World Tourism Organization and a RAMPAO, a network of marine protected areas in West Africa. This could be another area of possible cooperation with GRID-Arendal.

The Secretariat has also set up an experts’ panel to examine the issue, and is cooperating with the International Ocean Institute - Southern Africa (IOI-SA) to develop a policy blueprint on ocean governance that will lead to a blue economy for Africa. This is meant to improve the current absence of ocean governance. This development will have direct implications for management and policy frameworks in the marine, coastal and maritime sectors, and ultimately help ensure a sustainable and productive relationship between the oceans and the African people.

Referring to paragraph 300 (cooperation), UNEP has developed strong partnership with diverse stakeholders. For instance, NOWPAP has established strong partnerships with other regional projects and organizations: Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), North-East Asian Sub-regional Programme for

⁵ The review of the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy (MSSD) was requested by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at their 18th Meeting, in December 2013, by Decision IG. 21/9 The revised MSSD will be submitted for adoption to the 19th Meeting of the Contracting Parties in February 2016 and will be the first regional strategy of that kind, aiming to implement the SDGs at a regional level..



Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), UNESCO IOC Sub-commission for Western Pacific (IOC WESTPAC) and Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME). Increased cooperation has also occurred in the Wider Caribbean Region with international, regional and sub-regional agencies, in particular with Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN), the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CAWASA), UNEP Global Programme of Action (GPA), World Bank and the Global Water Partnership (GWP), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), as well as MEAS such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Through the activities, media coverage of environmental issues in the Wider Caribbean Region has increased.