



**Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group  
of the General Assembly to study issues related to the  
conservation and sustainable use of marine biological  
diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction**

1 – 5 February 2010  
New York

Delivered by Mr. Harlan Cohen  
(Please check against delivery)

**Agenda Item 4: Past and present activities of the United Nations and  
other relevant international organizations**

Mme/Mr. Co-Chair,

Biodiversity is essential for sustaining the natural living systems - the ecosystems - that provide clean air and water, food, medicine and other goods and services. IUCN – The International Union for Conservation of Nature therefore believes that biodiversity must be at the top of the world's agenda.

Well-managed natural resources support peaceful communities, encourage well-balanced economic growth and help reduce poverty. Currently, our activities are destroying the natural world at an unprecedented rate through over-harvesting, habitat destruction, pollution, climate change and other activities. Today we face a global species and habitat extinction crisis that will undermine the economic prosperity of our tomorrow. We must translate this recognition into conservation action now

The General Assembly has declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. A high level segment of the General Assembly will be convened in September to discuss “Biodiversity: Challenges and Responses”. The Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held in October in Nagoya, Japan.

My delegation welcomes this Working Group meeting and hopes to see a set of recommendations and conclusions that will come from it to advance the conservation and protection of marine biodiversity in support of this important Year.

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As the Secretary-General noted in a message of 9 November 2009:

“Over the past half-century, human activities have caused an unprecedented decline in biological diversity. Species are going extinct a thousand times faster than the natural rate – a loss now being further compounded by climate change....In 2002, world leaders agreed to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. The 2010 Biodiversity Target was subsequently integrated into the Millennium Development Goals. It will not be met....In this International Year, we must counter the perception that people are disconnected from our natural environment. We must increase understanding of the implications of losing biodiversity....We must generate a greater sense of urgency and establish clear and concrete targets. Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is our life<sup>1</sup>.”

### **Agenda Item 5(a): Strengthening the information base**

While the information base about marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction is not as extensive as that for terrestrial and coastal areas, it is sufficient to enable rational and precautionary management. As we seek pragmatic solutions to the world’s most pressing environment and development challenges, we look forward to progress and consensus at this meeting to protect, conserve and manage marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.

At the same time, there are certain practical and concrete steps that should be agreed now to protect this biodiversity that can also serve to fill knowledge gaps and address management, access to and dissemination of information. These include agreement to:

1. Continue discussion as necessary to find agreement on equitable access to and benefits from marine biodiversity for all of humanity. We are aware that there is a range of views to which Part of UNCLOS marine genetic resources beyond national jurisdiction are subject and that serious discussions are needed to foster an international consensus. As this make take time during which biodiversity may be irreversibly lost, we also need to move forward now on certain commonsense steps to encourage marine scientific research and to conserve marine biodiversity.
2. Require the application of strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessment procedures for human activities with a potential for significant adverse impacts on the marine environment, living marine resources and biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Strategic environmental assessments of potential plans, programs and policies, and prior environmental impact assessments of specific projects can build knowledge and help to compensate for the lack of knowledge about marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction and build the knowledge base to inform management.\
3. Protect vulnerable, significant and representative marine ecosystems in areas beyond national jurisdiction through the establishment of marine protected areas and related measures based on the criteria agreed through the CBD and through the FAO. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a centralized record of areas in need of protection to consolidate and ease access to information. Such a record could be maintained by an appropriate Secretariat body within the United Nations or through a wiki system.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.un.org/apps/sg/printsgstats.asp?nid=4218> for full message.

## **Agenda Item 5(b): Capacity-building and technology transfer**

Some relevant activities of IUCN relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction that support capacity building include:

With respect to vulnerable species, IUCN publishes the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ which is the world's most comprehensive, authoritative and objective resource on the global conservation status of plant and animal species, including their global risk for extinction. It is available on-line at [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org). With reference specifically to marine biodiversity, IUCN published in 2008 a "Red List Status of the World's Marine Species" in which it was noted that the number of marine species that had been assessed lagged far behind those of the terrestrial world. To fill this knowledge gap, IUCN with partners including Conservation International and Old Dominion University undertook a Global Marine Species Assessment to assess over 20,000 marine species by 2012. The results so far confirm that marine biodiversity is under threat. For example, approximately 17% of sharks and their relatives are threatened, an additional 13% are considered near threatened, and 47% are data deficient.

With respect to area-based management tools, IUCN is working with partners and with the support of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation to facilitate the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI). GOBI aims to help governments and regional and global organizations to use existing and new data, tools and methodologies to identify ecologically or biologically significant marine areas in the open ocean and deep sea, with a focus on areas beyond national jurisdiction. Through this work, it is hoped that countries will be able to meet goals adopted under the CBD and at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss, apply ecosystem approaches and to establish representative marine protected areas networks by 2012. GOBI and its work relevant to area-based management in beyond national jurisdiction will be featured at a lunch-time side event on Tuesday.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding marine protected areas, IUCN through the World Commission on Protected Areas – Marine has established a High Seas MPA Task Force to provide a platform for those interested in advancing the scientific and legal basis for protected areas beyond national jurisdiction, and to help support the establishment of pilot sites to gain pragmatic experience. WCPA Marine works with partners and scientists around the world to identify sites to serve as a basis for networks of marine protected areas. Working with Google Earth, IUCN has established a public wiki database to provide information on marine protected areas and to assist others as they establish additional areas.<sup>3</sup>

IUCN is also now directly involved in research of deep sea ecosystems. With partners, including the United Nations Development Programme, the Global Environment Facility, Zoological Society of London, the EAF-Nansen project, the Institute of Marine Research, Agulhas and Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystems Project; the Marine Ecology Laboratory, University of Reunion and the African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme, IUCN organized a six-week research expedition to gather data and species from six seamounts in areas beyond national jurisdiction in the southwest Indian Ocean. The work will directly feed

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<sup>2</sup> Further information on the Initiative, including the partners and work plan, is available at <http://gobi.org>.

<sup>3</sup> [www.protectplanetocan.org](http://www.protectplanetocan.org)

into conservation and management recommendations for the area and inform future management of deep-sea ecosystems in the high seas globally<sup>4</sup>.

**Agenda Item 5(c, d): Implementation, with a focus on implementation gaps in the international legal and policy framework and; Integrated ocean management and ecosystem approaches as well as cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination**

In the marine environment beyond national jurisdiction, overfishing and other destructive fishing practices have been the primary cause of loss of biodiversity to date. Thus, there is an urgent need for improving Regional Fisheries Management Organization performance, and to improve flag state control and enforcement over their vessels, and to coordinate efforts to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing activities. Several RFMOs have conducted performance evaluations. Members of these RFMOs may want to examine these evaluations, reflect on weaknesses in management regimes where these have been identified and introduce necessary reforms to correct or eliminate these weaknesses such that all RFMOs will be in a position to provide robust conservation and management for all stocks and species and dependent and related ecosystems. We welcome a review of these issues at the resumed United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement Review Conference later this year. We welcome progress made towards addressing the impacts of deep sea bottom fishing on marine biodiversity and note the need for full implementation of the provisions of UNGA resolution 61/105 as reflected in UNGA resolution 64/72. There is also a need to consider methods to protect vulnerable species and ecosystems in the pelagic realm. We encourage States and RFMOs to also apply the CBD and FAO criteria for identifying ecologically or biologically significant areas and to report on their progress in implementing them to the next UNGA. We further note the need to eliminate harmful subsidies that encourage overfishing and for which there is no economic justification. We urge all States to work to this end internally, at the World Trade Organization and in relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).

The harmful effects of climate change and ocean acidification are of increasing concern as a threat to marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. These newer threats need to be addressed now through improved implementation of the duty to protect and preserve the marine environment by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and by ensuring that pollution is not transferred from one type to another. In addition we need to take urgent action to reduce the full array of stressors to marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.

IUCN has published within the last months several studies on the effects of climate change on oceans with specific recommendations<sup>5</sup>. It is clear that integrated ocean management, effective implementation of ecosystem approaches and enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination are essential if we are to safeguard marine biodiversity and reduce these stressors.

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<sup>4</sup> Further information is available at the project website at [www.iucn.org/marine/seamounts](http://www.iucn.org/marine/seamounts), the cruise blog at <http://seamounts2009.blogspot.com/> and a diary on BBC Earth News at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth\\_news/newsid\\_8363000/8363108.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth_news/newsid_8363000/8363108.stm).

<sup>5</sup> See [http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/ocean\\_acidification\\_guide.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/ocean_acidification_guide.pdf);  
[http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/usa/news\\_usa/?3872/IPCC-for-the-Oceans](http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/usa/news_usa/?3872/IPCC-for-the-Oceans);  
Laffoley, D.d'A. & Grimsditch, G. (eds). 2009. The management of natural coastal carbon sinks. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. 53 pp at [http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/carbon\\_management\\_report\\_final\\_printed\\_version\\_1.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/carbon_management_report_final_printed_version_1.pdf);  
Herr, D. and Galland, G.R. (2009). *The Ocean and Climate Change. Tools and Guidelines for Action*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. 72pp. at [http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/the\\_ocean\\_and\\_climate\\_change.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/the_ocean_and_climate_change.pdf)

With respect to integrated management, IUCN members at the Fourth World Conservation Congress adopted a resolution calling on states to:

“(c) promote arrangements, processes and agreements that ensure the consistent, coordinated and coherent application of the best conservation and governance principles and approaches, including integrated ecosystem-based management and the precautionary approach; and (d) examine the need for further agreements to implement UNCLOS with respect to the conservation and protection of the marine environment and marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.”

Integrated approaches are also essential if we are to address new and emerging issues that threaten or have the potential to threaten the health of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. These include effects of increasing intensity and volume of noise in marine waters, which disturbs the behaviour and wellbeing of fish as well as of marine mammals; the effects of marine debris, including garbage patches or gyres; and the effects of geo-engineering techniques on the marine environment. Marine debris should be reduced through tightened restrictions on discharges from ships, including fishing vessels, the reduction of packaging and the establishment of waste receiving facilities in ports. Marine noise needs to be addressed through inter alia, redesign of ships, voyage planning to avoid sensitive times and areas, and other cooperative mechanisms. Geoengineering-related activities, including research, should be subject to mandatory environmental assessment processes that enable a full assessment of all potential impacts and feedback loops.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Agenda Item 5(e): Environmental Impact Assessments**

States have an obligation to assess, as far as practicable, the potential effects of activities that may cause substantial pollution or significant and harmful changes to the marine environment<sup>7</sup>. States have accepted the requirement of prior impact assessment and have most recently applied it with respect of bottom fishing in order to avoid significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems<sup>8</sup>. The United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement includes a requirement that coastal States and States fishing on the high seas “...assess the impacts of fishing, other human activities and environmental factors on target stocks and species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated with or dependent upon the target stocks<sup>9</sup>”. Thus, the known or likely impacts of other human activities are to be assessed and taken into account when making management decisions with respect of these stocks. Fisheries conservation and management measures should accordingly reflect the need to

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<sup>6</sup> Further information in the form of four papers on implementation gaps in the international legal and policy framework was presented during a side event at the United Nations in April 2008. These include: Kristina M. Gjerde et al. (2008). *Regulatory and Governance Gaps in the International Regime for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. x + 70; Kristina M. Gjerde et al. (2008). *Options for Addressing Regulatory and Governance Gaps in the International Regime for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. x + 20; Harm Dottinga and Erik J. Molenaar (2008). *The Mid-Atlantic Ridge: A Case Study on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. x + 22; and Sharelle Hart (2008). *Elements of a Possible Implementation Agreement to UNCLOS for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. x + 21 and can be found at [http://cms.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/marine/marine\\_news/?870/IUCN-launches-four-online-papers-to-inform-international-discussions-on-marine-biodiversity-in-ABNJ](http://cms.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/marine/marine_news/?870/IUCN-launches-four-online-papers-to-inform-international-discussions-on-marine-biodiversity-in-ABNJ)

<sup>7</sup> See UNCLOS Art 206

<sup>8</sup> See resolution 61/105, reconfirmed through resolution 64/72

<sup>9</sup> See Article 5(d)

maintain, restore and protect ecosystem health and biodiversity in the face of these other stresses. Other activities where prior assessment is required include mineral activities in the Area and dumping at sea under the London Convention and the London Protocol.

Thus, the concept of prior environmental impact assessment is well-known and established with respect of a number of – but not all – marine activities that have the potential to affect the marine environment and to damage marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. It is time to agree and harmonize this requirement for all activities that are likely to have a harmful effect on the marine environment or marine biodiversity.

With respect to EIAs, IUCN members at the Fourth World Conservation Congress adopted a resolution urging that the General Assembly include in a resolution a call on states to:

“a) develop assessment processes, including the assessment of cumulative impacts, of human activities with a potential for significant adverse impacts on the marine environment, living marine resources and biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction; and b) ensure that assessed activities with the potential for such significant adverse impacts are subject to prior authorization by states responsible for nationals and vessels engaged in those activities, consistent with international law, and that such activities are managed to prevent such significant adverse impacts, or not authorized to proceed;”

Globally agreed guidelines or a specific instrument on EIAs and SEA for areas beyond national jurisdiction may help to ensure their consistent, coordinated and coherent application, as well as provide a mechanism for developing capacity for their implementation.

At the eighth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea my delegation presented some ideas on practical steps to bring this forward. Drawing from that presentation which was in turn based measures that States had adopted for internal use and from Annex I of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, my delegation suggested some specific elements for inclusion in prior environmental impact assessments for marine areas.

Since then, there has been further consideration of prior assessment by the international community. For example, the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity invited:

“Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, including in the context of the United Nations Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, to cooperate in further developing scientific and technical guidance for the implementation of environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments for activities and processes under their jurisdiction and control which may have significant adverse impacts on marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, taking into consideration the work of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization, and other relevant organizations, with a view to ensuring such activities are regulated in such a way that they do not compromise ecosystem integrity, and to report to the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting on progress made in that regard.”<sup>10</sup>

Pursuant to this decision, the CBD convened an expert workshop on scientific and technical aspects relevant to environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessments in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction in Manila in November 2009. In reviewing the CBD Voluntary Guidelines on Biodiversity-inclusive EIAs, the workshop noted several

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<sup>10</sup> CBD in Decision IX/20 paragraphs 8-10

fundamental ecological, governance and practical (operational) differences from EIA guidelines developed for terrestrial, freshwater or coastal ecosystems. These considerations are important during discussions on the need for specific guidance concerning areas beyond national jurisdiction.

In conclusion, a recommendation should go forward to the General Assembly that States are to require and implement procedures for prior environmental impact assessments and develop procedures for strategic environmental assessments. Consideration should also be given to a recommendation for the development of guidelines or other instrument for EIAs and SEAs to enhance their consistent application.

Elements for EIA processes for activities whose impacts are likely to be minor or transitory or less the assessment could be a short and simple statement of the proposed activity, name and contact information of the operator, location, duration and likely impact or impacts. If marine genetic materials are to be collected, additional information could be included on likely impact of collection, purpose of collection (commercial or not), proposed means to collect and label materials, information on proposed disposition including transfer of materials, and information on plans to share data and scientific information through publication or full and open exchange of information. States should require monitoring where appropriate. Collected data, information and knowledge should be shared and made publicly available.

#### **Agenda Item 5(f): Area-based management tools, in particular marine protected areas**

Area-based management tools already exist in areas beyond national jurisdiction. These include areas where shipping is subject to special restrictions under International Maritime Organization (IMO) rules, areas closed by Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to fishing on a spatial or temporal basis or where there may be limitations with respect to gear that may be used, and areas where entry is restricted to protect scientific study or values. States recognized through the adoption at the World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg of the Plan of Implementation that to promote the conservation and management of oceans, diverse approaches and tools should be developed, including:

“...the establishment of marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including representative networks by 2012 and time/area closures for the protection of nursery grounds and periods...”<sup>11</sup>

We have much work to do if we are to meet this goal, which was reiterated by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2003. Currently, less than one per cent of the high seas are under some type of significant protection. States working through Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and Regional Seas Programs should establish Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) now in areas beyond national jurisdiction to protect vulnerable species, nursery grounds and other ecologically or biologically significant areas based on the CBD and FAO criteria. States working through the International Maritime Organization (IMO) should establish Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) now in areas beyond national jurisdiction to protect the identified areas from specific threats related to shipping. States working through the International Seabed Authority should designate Preservation Reference Areas with respect to seabed mining.

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<sup>11</sup> See A/CONF.199/20 paragraph 32(c)

With respect to high seas MPAs, the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona in October 2008 called on States to:

“enhance efforts under current arrangements and agreements to protect the marine environment and biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, including *inter alia*, to identify ecologically and biologically significant areas using scientific criteria and guidelines of the CBD and other relevant criteria, to protect habitats and species in such areas through the application of multiple tools including the establishment of MPAs, and to facilitate the development of representative networks of MPAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction; promote arrangements, processes and agreements that ensure the consistent, coordinated and coherent application of the best conservation and governance principles and approaches, including integrated ecosystem-based management and the precautionary approach; and examine the need for further agreements to implement UNCLOS with respect to the conservation and protection of the marine environment and marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction”.

In a second resolution of the World Conservation Congress, IUCN members called on States to:

“(a) accelerate their efforts to increase the establishment of MPAs and to create, by 2012, a global and effectively managed system of marine and coastal protected areas in accordance with the goals set by the WSSD and CBD;  
(b) recognize the need to improve the management effectiveness of existing and future MPAs to increase marine resilience in the face of climate change and ocean acidification;  
(c) define MPA systems based on a diversity of complementary tools which allow the combination of highly protected areas with managed multiple use areas;  
(d) promote the creation of effectively managed MPAs beyond national jurisdictions, in accordance with international law;...”

To accelerate action in the short term, my delegation would suggest that consideration be given to encouraging the United Nations General Assembly to adopt a resolution calling on States and relevant organizations to protect vulnerable, significant and representative marine ecosystems in areas beyond national jurisdiction through the establishment of full marine protected areas and other measures based on the CBD and FAO criteria with a view towards establishing representative networks by 2012. States and relevant organizations could be invited to report on progress to the General Assembly in 2012.

#### **Agenda Item 5(g): Marine genetic resources, with a particular focus on the relevant legal regime in accordance with the Convention**

My delegation believes that we need to find a way forward to ensure the conservation and sustainable and equitable use of marine biodiversity and marine genetic resources, to the benefit of all humankind and such that the interests of all states are promoted. We welcome consultations in a spirit of cooperation to find a solution. As these consultations go forward, my delegation emphasizes the need for scientific research that often represents a significant undertaking involving specialists from a number of institutions, backgrounds and countries. Such programs, their objectives and the resulting flow of scientific data, information and knowledge should be published and shared, especially with developing States, in accordance with UNCLOS<sup>12</sup>. In this regard, we are of the view that with respect of areas beyond national jurisdiction patents should not be available for genomes, which are not inventions and to which access should not be privatized, and that the geographic origin of the source material for the patent should be specified.

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<sup>12</sup> See UNCLOS Art. 244

At the World Conservation Congress in October 2008, IUCN served as a neutral convener of a dialogue on governing the high seas beyond national jurisdiction. IUCN's President launched a discussion of ten principles for high seas governance that were drawn from agreements on natural resource management and reflect fundamental principles that countries have already accepted, though not as yet necessarily fully implemented. This set of principles was developed to stimulate progress towards consensus on the complex of issues related to high seas governance by identifying common guidelines and goals for action. They include the following:

1. Conditional freedom of activity on the high seas (with rights come responsibilities),
2. Protection and preservation of the marine environment,
3. International cooperation,
4. Science-based approach to management,
5. Public availability of information,
6. Transparent and open decision making processes,
7. Precautionary approach,
8. Ecosystem approach,
9. Sustainable and equitable use,
10. Responsibility of States as stewards of the global marine environment.

**Agenda Item 6: Identification of key issues and questions where more detailed background studies would facilitate consideration by States of these issues**

While we welcome additional detailed background studies and the Regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects as outlined in resolution 64/71, my delegation thinks it time to move forward now with a suite of recommendations to conserve and protect marine biodiversity. We note the need for up-to-date and integrated information on the world's oceans. To this end, we urge rapid progress to establish and implement the Regular Process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects. We are reminded that we will need this reporting and assessment to assist the Commission on Sustainable Development in its work when it reviews marine issues in 2014 and 2015. We also need this information in order to benchmark the progress we have made towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to show us where we have not made sufficient progress towards those goals. Thus, we would welcome a recommendation from this working group supporting the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process and noting references to the principles listed in paragraph 21 of that report (A/64/347):

- (a) Viewing the oceans as part of the whole Earth system;
- (b) Regular evaluation by Member States of assessment products and the regular process itself to support adaptive management;
- (c) Use of sound science and the promotion of scientific excellence;
- (d) Regular analysis to ensure that emerging issues, significant changes and gaps in knowledge are detected at an early stage;
- (e) Continual improvement in scientific and assessment capacity, including the promotion and development of capacity-building activities and transfer of technology;
- (f) Effective links with policymakers and other users;
- (g) Inclusiveness with respect to communication and engagement with all stakeholders through appropriate means for their participation, including appropriate

- representation and regional balance at all levels;
- (h) Recognition and utilization of traditional and indigenous knowledge and principles;
  - (i) Transparency and accountability for the regular process and its products;
  - (j) Exchange of information at all levels;
  - (k) Effective links with, and building on, existing assessment processes, in particular at the regional and national levels;
  - (l) Adherence to equitable geographical representation in all activities of the regular process.

Thank you, Mme/Mr. Co-Chair.