

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

UN-OCEANS

The UN INTER-AGENCY OCEANS AND COASTAL AREAS NETWORK Third Meeting, UNESCO/IOC, Paris, 23 January 2006

Present at the Meeting were representatives of UN DOALOS, UNDP, WB, CBD, IMO, IAEA, UNEP, UNEP-GPA, UNESCO/IOC, UN/DESA. The representative from FAO participated in the discussions under item 5 (UN Atlas), which had been left open until his arrival after the close of the formal meeting.

1. Opening of the meeting: The Secretary relayed the regrets of Patricio Bernal (UNESCO/IOC), the Coordinator of UN-O, for his unavoidable absence. Anne Rogers (UN/DESA), Deputy Coordinator of UN-O, Chaired the meeting.

2. Agenda: Meeting adopted the proposed agenda

3. Guiding Principles for Charting Environmentally-Sound Coastal Post-Tsunami Rehabilitation

Recalling the agreement of the UN Oceans meeting in January 2005 on the work of Task Force on Post-Tsunami Response, UNEP/GPA presented the Draft Guiding Principles for Charting Environmentally-Sound Coastal Rehabilitation in the tsunami-affected region.

The UNEP/GPA representative requested support of UN-O for the Draft Guiding Principles document for presentation at the Conference on Oceans, Coasts and Small Islands and later at the UNEP Governing Council (February, 2006) as a joint UN-O product.

In the ensuing discussion it was agreed that the support of UN-Oceans for the Guidelines should be expressed as follows:

"The 12 Guiding Principles and the annotated Guiding Principles for Chartering Environmentally-sound Coastal Rehabilitation are products of the Task Force on Post-Tsunami Response established by UN-Oceans. UN-Oceans supports the implementation of the Guiding Principles".

It was noted that a series of editorial changes to the Guiding Principles that were pointed out by some of the participants should be carried out before the document is finalized.

A progress report provided by UNEP/GPA was noted in relation to this agenda item (Annex I).

4. Inputs to UN-O Task Force on the 2nd Intergovernmental Review of the GPA: proposal for a joint task force of UN-Oceans and UN-Water

It was recalled that UNEP/GPA previously distributed the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the UN-O Task Force on the 2nd Intergovernmental Review of the GPA and proposed to have a joint endeavor with UN Water and asked that each UN-O Member appoint a focal point for inputs to preparatory documents. Unfortunately, not a sufficient number of responses have been received to date and UN-O members were requested to reconsider the ToR.

The meeting noted that some of the objectives, especially objectives 3 and 4 as stated in the document distributed by UNEP/GPA, need to be clarified and requested that their revised terms be redistributed to UN-O members. Furthermore, the institutional aspects of cooperation with

NGOs need to be carefully scrutinized and tasks to be carried out by them should be defined explicitly. The draft revised ToR, together with the end-products that are expected, should then be circulated among UN-O members for their consideration. This will be done by e-mail, preferably prior to the consideration of the draft ToR by UN-Water at its next meeting (27 February-1 March 2006).

Upon the approval of a revised ToR, IAEA, IMO, UNDP, CBD, WB, UN-DESA, UN-DOALOS, FAO and UNESCO/IOC intend to contribute to the work of the Task Force through their focal points listed during the meeting.

5. Status of the UN ATLAS

FAO, as lead agency for the UN Atlas of the Oceans, had requested UN-O to reconsider the fund sharing proposals for the Atlas initially put forward in June 2005, as very little response had been received to date. The purpose of FAO's request was to obtain commitments from the core UN Agencies working on Oceans (FAO, IAEA, IMO, IOC-UNESCO, UNEP, WMO) that they will financially support the further development and maintenance of the system. For the last year and a half, the UN Atlas has been operating without any financial support and with the technical support of FAO and free-of-charge low-level support from John Everett (Former NOHA staff) and Frances Michaelis (from Australia, NOAA Consultant).

UN-Oceans members responded that the debate on the issue of the Atlas funding, in the June 2005 session of UN-O, came too late to have provisions made in their individual organization's 2006-07 budget proposals. In addition, a number of agencies were, like FAO, facing budgetary constraints. Nonetheless, the following commitments were expressed:

- DOALOS informed UN-O that it intended to sign the UN Atlas Agreement and that some financial support to the Atlas would be forthcoming. Such support could not be formally programmed as the issue was discussed after the budget had been agreed but an interim solution will be found for 2006 and the support will be formally programmed for the following years.
- IMO indicated that, for the same reasons, there was no budget specifically allocated for the Atlas in the 2006-2007 bienium but IMO is currently considering mobilizing funds around \$5000 from one of its existing budget line and FAO would be contacted to clarify the modality of their use. For the following bienium 2008-2009 it is intended to plan for a dedicated budget line or integrated in an existing one with a possible increase in the amount.
- UNEP indicated that if these contributions were made available, it will also participate in the effort to sustain the Atlas.
- UN-DESA informed UN-O that Patrizio Civili, the Assistant General Secretary for Inter-Agency Coordination and ECOSOC Affairs/DESA, and Secretary of the CEB, had suggested that a presentation of the UN Atlas, its use and value to users and the coordination of the UN work, could be made at the next meeting of the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), planned for end-February 2006. HLCP is the CEB's subsidiary body dealing with most substantive coordination issues, including oversight of UN-Oceans. Detailed information on date and venue will be sent to FAO. Direct funding from DESA is not excluded and will be considered if a specific request is received (send to Anne Rogers).
- IAEA recognized the value of the Atlas and will consider funding for a period of time based on a business plan that targets the self-sustainability of the project. Such a contribution should be proportional to the overall IAEA mandate and the contribution of other partners.
- UNESCO/IOC it will also participate in the effort to sustain the Atlas by providing a \$10,000 contribution.

- In addition, outside the meeting, Peter Neill, Director of the World Ocean Observatory (a partner of the UN Atlas) promised to look for a contribution of between \$5,000-\$10,000 for the Atlas.

FAO gratefully acknowledged the commitments expressed and confirmed that if these contributions materialized, his organization will match them and will continue to provide free of charge the central support from the Information Technology Unit and the editorial support as well as project management.

Serge Garcia (FAO) will pursue with Anne Rogers (UN/DESA) the possibility of presenting information on the Atlas at the next meeting of the HLCP (subsequently confirmed to take place 27 February-1 March 2006 near Paris).

6. Briefing on matters related to the implementation of Assessment of Assessments for the Regular Process

As the lead agency for the UN-O Task Force on establishing a Regular Process for a Global Marine Assessment (GMA) the UN-DOALOS representative pointed out that the Second International Workshop on the Regular Process (13-15 June 2005), made recommendations to the UN General Assembly, which were subsequently adopted in its resolution A/RES/60/30 on Oceans and the law of the sea (29 November 2005), in particular, regarding modalities for the establishment of the "Assessment of Assessments". In that resolution, the UN General Assembly identified two lead agencies for the start-up phase of the Regular Process: UNEP and IOC of UNESCO.

The UN/DOALOS representative further pointed out that, in accordance with the terms of reference of the Task Force, it might be appropriate for the role of convener to be taken over by UNEP and/or IOC of UNESCO and for the terms of reference to be revised accordingly. This suggestion is in accord with the Section IV.2 of the report of the first meeting of UN-O.

A short resume of the work done since the adoption of the resolution A/RES/60/30 was then given by the UNEP representative. The draft Assessment of Assessments implementation plan that takes into account the modalities defined in the resolution, was considered. The importance of the participation of DOALOS in general, and in relation to the appointment by the UNGA President of the Ad Hoc ~~steering group~~ Steering Group members (18 in total from the regional groups and 5 UN ~~Agency~~ agency representatives and ISA), in particular, was stressed. The meeting also discussed details of the process to identify the expert group also called for by the General Assembly. Finally a time table for work to be done was presented.

7. Progress in the work of UN-O Task Force on Biodiversity in Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction

A brief was provided by the representative of the secretariat of CBD on the work of this Task Force to date (see also Annex II). The meeting expressed its satisfaction with the progress made. DOALOS stressed the importance of the coordination of the Task Force's work with that of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group established by the General Assembly (Resolution 59/24 on Oceans and the Law of the Sea paras 73-74) to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

8. Recent Developments concerning GESAMP

IMO as the Administrative Secretary of GESAMP provided a short account ~~brief~~ on the status of GESAMP. The recent establishment of a working group on ballast water was noted. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has recently pledged \$1 million to GESAMP to support its activities and, in particular to: (1) strengthen the GESAMP Network; (2) support the participation of scientific experts from developing countries in the activities of GESAMP; and (3)

to support GESAMP's role in the "UN Regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects", subject to confirmation of GESAMP's involvement in the UN Regular Process (GMA).

UN-O representatives expressed their satisfaction especially in as regards to funding by SIDA and encouraged cooperative efforts be developed between GESAMP and the Assessment of Assessments process, as appropriate (see also item 6).

9. Other matters

The UN-O Secretariat (UNESCO/IOC) informed the participants of an initiative on "Coordination of UN Efforts to Advance Establishment and Conservation of Marine Protected Areas". This initiative may seek opportunities for collaboration through a task force within the UN-O.

In case a request for the establishment of a task force is made, it will be conveyed electronically to UN-O members for their consideration.

The Deputy Coordinator, acting as Chair, suggested that a future meeting of UN-Oceans consider the status and development of its dedicated website [<http://www.un-oceans.org>], currently managed by UNESCO/IOC, in view of a number of difficulties expressed about its continued operations.

10. Date of the Next Meeting and Closure

It was agreed to hold the next UN-O meeting in conjunction with the seventh meeting of the GA's UN Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the law of the sea (ICP), 2-16 June 2006 in New York). DOALOS will provide information on what dates will be most convenient for a back-to-back meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 13:00 hrs on 23 January 2006.

ANNEX I
Post-tsunami activities undertaken by the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office
An Update: December 2005.

The UN Oceans in its meeting of January 2005 entrusted UNEP/GPA Coordination Office with the responsibility to lead the Task Force on Post-Tsunami Response, including developing key principles to guide the Coastal Zone Rehabilitation and Management in the Tsunami Affected Region. In pursuance to this decision UNEP/GPA Coordination Office carried out a number of activities and the outcomes of them are reported below.

UNEP/GPA Coordination Office in cooperation with the UNEP Asian Tsunami Disaster Task organised a meeting in Cairo, Egypt in February 2005 to discuss and decide on “environmentally-sound coastal zone rehabilitation and management in the “tsunami affected region. The Regional Organisation for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) hosted the meeting. The participants to the meeting included senior government officials from the tsunami-affected countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Seychelles, Tanzania and Yemen) and representatives of international organizations and institutions (DEFRA/UK, DFID/UK, FAO, UNESCO, World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, League of Arab States, IUCN, WWF and UNEP). This allowed key principles for coastal reconstruction and rehabilitation to be discussed within the broader framework of integrated coastal zone management, while providing a venue for knowledge to be exchanged on related policy tools and mechanisms aimed at reducing impacts of possible future disasters. The participants adopted 12 Guiding Principles for environmentally sound coastal rehabilitation and reconstruction (known as the Cairo Principles).

The Cairo meeting also agreed on expanding and annotating the principles to further extend and illustrate the guidance with references and practical experiences. Further actions proposed were as follows:

- Have the principles endorsed by the countries and provide for support in translating them into national legislation and regulations,
- Have the annotated guideline on the adopted principles endorsed by UN-Oceans,
- Have the principles disseminated and translated in local languages of the affected countries

As a follow-up to the Cairo meeting, the GPA coordinating office mobilized resources to support national-level dialogues for wide dissemination of the 12 guiding principles and to develop consensus to ensure their incorporation in the national reconstruction plan. To date national dialogues have successfully been organised in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Seychelles with key stakeholders and the 12 guiding principles and this process resulted in national endorsement of the 12 guiding principles, and translation of the principles in national languages (Thai, Singhalese, Tamil and Creoles) for effective implementation. The guiding principles are now available in English and respective national languages with the LOGO of the national government. In continuation of this MOU has been concluded with the Government of Yemen and discussion is in progress with the Maldives, Indonesia, Tanzania and Kenya to hold such dialogues, and translation of the key principles into their national languages.

ANNEX II

Progress in the work of the UN-Oceans Task Force on Biodiversity in Marine Areas Beyond the Limits of National Jurisdictions 23 January 2006

The two expected outputs of this task force were:

1. A consensus of the global distribution of biodiversity (including genetic resources) in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, as well as the status of this biodiversity and the threats that it is under.
2. A consensus of what tools (within the international and regional legal regime) are available for the conservation and sustainable use of this biodiversity.

Of these two outputs, No. 2 has now been finalized. Task Force members contributed to a CBD study titled "The International Legal Regime of the High Seas and the Seabed Beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction and Options for Cooperation for the Establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Marine Areas Beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction". Although interpretations amongst lawyers may vary, there is now a good understanding about what tools are available for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

There are preliminary results for expected output No. 1 in the form of a CBD study titled "Patterns of Species Richness in the High Seas". The study is based on a Geographic Information Systems analysis of distribution patterns of ecosystems and species in marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, including cold-water coral reefs and seamounts, and major invertebrate and vertebrate groups. An analysis of priority areas for conservation was also produced. UNEP kindly provided cold-water coral reef data for this study, and the fisheries data originated from the FAO. A study on genetic resources has also been undertaken by the United Nations University, and was used by the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice.

Although this is a good start, there are still many knowledge gaps. Therefore the database established as part of this study needs further review and updating. This could be accomplished through incorporation of the following:

- Integration of the UNEP-WCMC database on cold water coral reefs (this database is currently under preparation)
- Incorporation of results of the work of the Census of Marine Life Seamount Group
- Incorporation of new FAO fisheries data when available
- Incorporation of any other data from the Task Force member organizations
- A final Task Force review of the results

In addition to the activities described above, a Task Force website is under preparation. This website will highlight the progress made within the UN system on issues relating to marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, and will provide an information resource for those working on this issue, both within the UN system and outside. The website will likely be hosted on the UN Atlas of the Oceans.