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PROGRESS REPORT ON DESCRIBING AREAS MEETING THE CRITERIA FOR ECOLOGICALLY AND BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its tenth meeting, established a global process, based on the organization of a series of regional workshops (decision X/29, paragraph 36), for describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) through the application of scientific criteria in annex I of decision IX/20 as well as other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria.

Regional workshops for describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas

2. Pursuant to this decision, regional workshops on describing EBSAs were convened by the Executive Secretary for the Western South Pacific (November 2011) and the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic (February-March 2012) regions, and the results were reviewed by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its sixteenth meeting (SBSTTA 16). The results of these first two workshops were considered by the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting (COP 11) and, pursuant to decision XI/17, the summary reports on the description of areas that meet the criteria for EBSAs, prepared by the Subsidiary Body at its sixteenth meeting, were submitted to the United Nations General Assembly as well as its relevant working groups, by means of a letter from the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.¹

3. Further, at its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested in its decision XI/17 that additional workshops be organized for the remaining regions or subregions where Parties wish workshops be held and that the reports of these workshops be made available for consideration by future meetings of the Subsidiary Body. The summary reports from the Subsidiary Body are then to be made available for

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/1.

¹ UNGA document A/67/838, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/838.

future meetings of the Conference of the Parties for consideration with a view to including the reports in the EBSA repository in line with the purpose and procedures set out in decisions X/29 and XI/17.

4. Seven regional workshops have been organized since the sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body, five of them since the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The reports of these seven workshops are being submitted for consideration by the eighteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body, and, subsequently, by the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. These workshops were for the following regions:

- (a) Southern Indian Ocean (Flic en Flac, Mauritius, 31 July to 3 August 2012);²
- (b) Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific (Galapagos, Ecuador, 28 to 31 August 2012);³
- (c) North Pacific (Moscow, Russian Federation, 25 February to 1 March 2013);⁴
- (d) South-Eastern Atlantic (Swakopmund, Namibia, 8 to 12 April 2013);⁵
- (e) Arctic (Helsinki, Finland, 3 to 7 March 2014);⁶
- (f) North-West Atlantic (Montreal, Canada, 24 to 28 March 2014);⁷ and
- (g) Mediterranean (Málaga, Spain, 7 to 11 April 2014).⁸

5. Section II of this note provides a progress report on these additional workshops and highlights some key conclusions arising from each of them. The full reports of these seven workshops are available (UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SIO/1/4, UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/ETTP/1/4, UNEP/CBD/EBSA/NP/1/4, UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SEA/1/4, UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/1/5, UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/2/4, UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/3/4). To assist the Subsidiary Body in its work of preparing summary reports, a summary description of each of the areas meeting the EBSA criteria is provided in an addendum to this note (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/4/Add.1).

6. Additional workshops are being planned for the North-East Indian Ocean, the North-West Indian Ocean and for East Asian Seas. Further workshops may be organized for other regions where Parties request them, in line with decision XI/17. Moreover, as recognized in decision XI/17, additional workshops for the further description of areas already described may be held where new information becomes available, subject to the availability of financial resources.

7. Table 1 lists all regional workshops held to date and those in planning, and indicates the number of countries that have been represented in the workshops held to date; some countries are represented in more than one workshop. Figure 1 shows that regional workshops to describe areas meeting EBSA criteria have been held for most of the world's ocean areas (see figure 1). The workshops have addressed the areas within national jurisdiction when so decided by the countries concerned. It was noted that a number of countries are undertaking national processes of applying EBSA criteria or other relevant

² Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-SIO-01>.

³ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-ETTP-01>.

⁴ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-NP-01>.

⁵ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSA-SEA-01>.

⁶ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSAWS-2014-01>.

⁷ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSAWS-2014-02>.

⁸ Report and documentation available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EBSAWS-2014-03>.

criteria in areas within their national jurisdictions to identify areas meeting EBSA criteria or similar initiatives. Some of these countries shared their national experiences of applying EBSA criteria at the relevant regional workshops. Also the OSPAR Commission and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), in cooperation with International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), are finalizing a report for a workshop that described areas meeting the EBSA criteria in the North-East Atlantic.

8. In decision XI/17, the Conference of the Parties affirmed that scientific description of areas meeting scientific criteria for EBSAs and other relevant criteria is an open and evolving process that should be continued to allow ongoing improvement and updating as improved scientific and technical information becomes available in each region. Moreover, each of the regional workshops identified gaps and needs for further elaboration as well as suggestions for possible improvements through additional research, scientific collaboration and capacity development (see the workshop reports and the summaries contained in section II below). Accordingly, it may be useful to review the experience of the first round of workshops with a view of developing practical options for further work on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, including systematic assessment of scientific information, use of traditional knowledge, and other approaches at local, national, subregional or regional scales.

EBSA repository and information-sharing mechanism

9. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention, in decision X/29, requested the Executive Secretary to establish a repository for scientific and technical information and experience related to the application of the scientific criteria for EBSAs. In decision XI/17, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to further develop, subject to availability of financial resources, the EBSA prototype repository and the information-sharing mechanism into a fully functional repository and information-sharing mechanism for scientific and technical information and experience related to the application of the scientific criteria on the identification of EBSAs in annex I to decision IX/20, as well as other relevant criteria. Section III of this note provides a progress report on collaboration to develop a fully functional EBSA portal website and repository.

Capacity-building related to EBSAs

10. In decision X/29, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a training manual and modules, which can be used to meet the capacity-building needs related to the application of the EBSA scientific criteria for, and to undertake a study to identify specific elements for integrating the traditional, scientific, technical and technological knowledge of indigenous and local communities, and social and cultural criteria and other aspects for the application of the scientific criteria as well as the establishment and management of marine protected areas. In decision XI/17, the Conference of the Parties requested that the Executive Secretary further refine the training manuals and modules, as necessary, including further consultation with Parties and indigenous and local communities and the development of training materials on the use of traditional knowledge. Section IV of this note provides a progress report on development of an EBSA training manual that integrates traditional knowledge in the application of the EBSA criteria. The training manual on integrating traditional knowledge in the application of the EBSA criteria is under preparation.

11. In decision XI/17, the Conference of the Parties also requested the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of financial resources, to facilitate capacity-building related to the description of EBSAs. Information on additional related capacity-building activities by the Executive Secretary is provided in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/7.

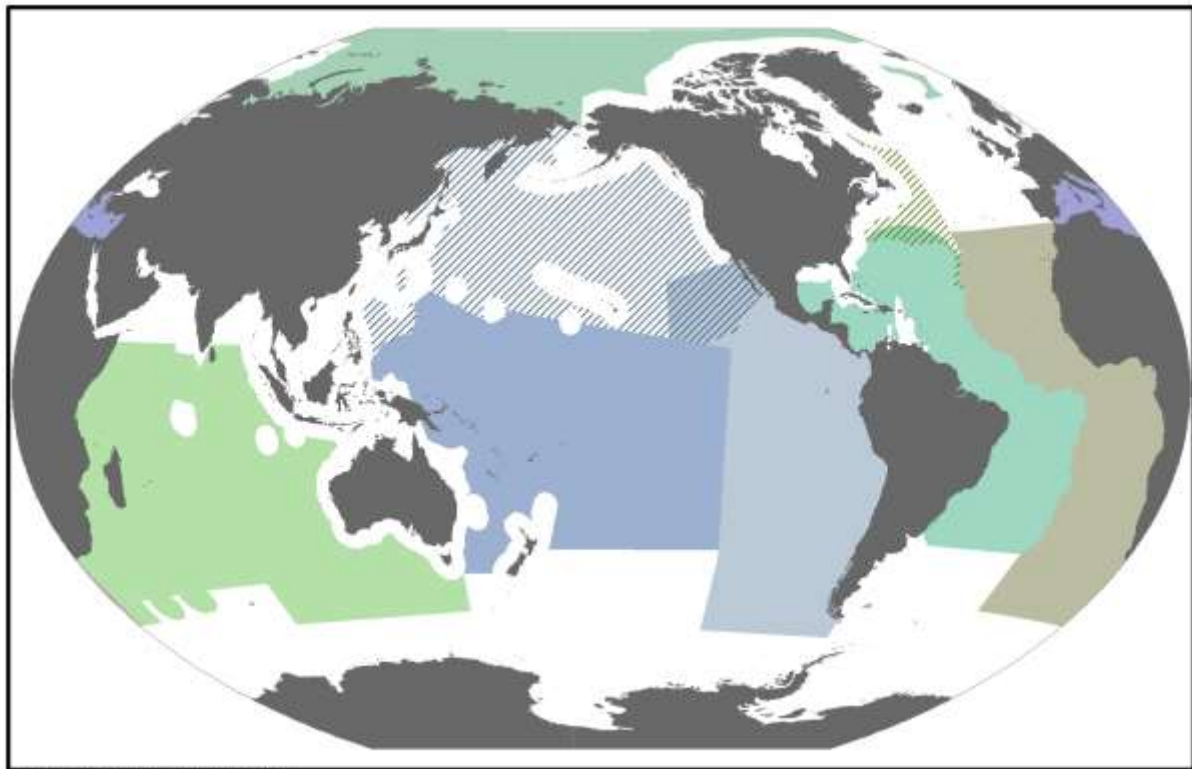


Figure 1. The geographical scope of the nine regional workshops organized by the CBD Secretariat to facilitate the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria.

Table 1. Regional workshops convened by the Executive Secretary

Regional workshop on EBSAs	Date	Host country	No. of countries*	No. of organizations*	EBSAs (A)	EBSAs with NJ (B)	EBSAs with ABNJ (C)	Status
Western South Pacific	Nov 2011	Fiji	15	10	26	22	11	Considered by COP 11
Wider Caribbean & Western Mid-Atlantic	Feb-Mar 2012	Brazil	23	15	21	21	5	Considered by COP 11
Southern Indian Ocean	July-Aug 2012	Mauritius	16	20	39	30	13	To be considered by SBSTTA 18
Eastern Tropical & Temperate Pacific	Aug 2012	Ecuador	13	12	21	18	7	To be considered by SBSTTA 18
North Pacific	Feb-Mar 2013	Russian Federation	8	7	20	15	5	To be considered by SBSTTA 18
South-Eastern Atlantic	April 2013	Namibia	17	15	45	42	7	To be considered by SBSTTA 18
Arctic	March 2014	Finland	7	13	11	9	2	To be considered by SBSTTA 18
North-West Atlantic	March 2014	Canada	2	5	7	0	7	To be considered by SBSTTA 18
Mediterranean	April 2014	Spain	21	16	17	***	***	To be considered by SBSTTA 18
North-East Indian Ocean**	February 2015	TBD	--	--	--	--	--	In planning
North-West Indian Ocean**	March 2015	TBD	--	--	--	--	--	In planning
East Asian Seas**	April 2015	TBD	--	--	--	--	--	In planning
<i>Sum</i>			<i>122</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>207</i>	<i>157****</i>	<i>57****</i>	

* Note: Some countries and some organizations have participated in more than one workshop.

** Tentative dates and venues.

*** Information is not available.

**** These numbers do not include those from the Mediterranean.

(A) Number of areas described to meet the EBSA criteria by the workshop.

(B) Number of areas described to meet the EBSA criteria wholly or partly within national jurisdiction.

(C) Number of areas described to meet the EBSA criteria wholly or partly beyond national jurisdiction.

Note: A does not equal to B+C, because some EBSAs contain areas within and beyond national jurisdiction.

II. REGIONAL WORKSHOPS HELD SINCE SBSTTA 16 FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS (EBSAs)

12. As noted above, this section provides a summary of the seven regional workshops organized since the sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body (paragraph 4 above). For the two regional workshops that were held prior to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties but after the sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body (Southern Indian Ocean and Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific regions), this progress report drew upon the progress report provided to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting in document UNEP/CBD/COP/11/22.

Southern Indian Ocean Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Flic en Flac, Mauritius, from 31 July to 3 August 2012)

13. The Executive Secretary convened this workshop in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It was hosted by the Government of Mauritius and organized with financial support from the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund). The Government of Australia provided technical support, through the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in their scientific and technical preparation for the workshop.

14. The workshop participants were selected based on nominations submitted by Parties in the Southern Indian Ocean region, including the area of the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region, in response to notification 2012-059 (Ref. no. SCBD/STTM/JL/JG/79642, dated 25 April 2012), based on the selection criteria provided in the notification. Participants were also selected based on nominations from the relevant United Nations/international and regional organizations based on the same selection criteria in the notifications.

15. In order to facilitate the scientific and technical deliberations of the workshop, the Secretariat issued notification 2012-073 (Ref. no. SCBD/STTM/JM/JL/JG/79841, dated 16 May 2012), to all CBD Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, to request the submission of scientific information in support of the objectives of the workshop. The submissions of scientific information were compiled with technical support from CSIRO.

16. The workshop participants considered the geographic scope for the workshop, taking into account the Global Open Oceans and Deep Seabed (GOODS) biogeographic classification system, and agreed that the scope would be the Southern Indian Ocean, bounded in the north by the northern coverage of the Nairobi Convention (10 degrees North), in the south by the northern boundary of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), in the west by the east coast of Africa (to include the Agulhas Current eco-region), and in the east by the boundary of the Western South Pacific regional EBSA workshop. Within this region, the area comprised the marine areas within the national jurisdiction of member countries of the Nairobi Convention (Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa (Agulhas Current eco-region only), and the United Republic of Tanzania) and of Indonesia (Indian Ocean only), Maldives, Sri Lanka and the overseas territories of France, as well as marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. Marine areas under the national jurisdiction of Australia, India, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, where separate national processes are under way, were not included.

17. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 39 areas meeting the EBSA criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in table 1 of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/4/Add.1;

further details of description are contained in the appendix to annex IV of the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SIO/1/4).

18. Key conclusions of the workshop on gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing areas meeting EBSA criteria include the following (further details are found in annex VII to the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SIO/1/4):

(a) The relatively few scientific cruises that the Indian Ocean has historically hosted. For example, the southwest Indian Ocean Ridge, the site of recent cruises, has little historical scientific data by which to place it in context. The current situation is exacerbated by piracy;

(b) Limited information for deep-water areas in the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of all countries. This limits the description of areas for EBSA criteria in these waters. In addition, limited information on areas beyond national jurisdiction in areas off Eastern Africa (between the mainland and Seychelles Islands) prevented any description of areas for EBSA criteria in this area;

(c) Lack of capacity (e.g., technical expertise; vessels and equipment) in several countries. This was noted as a constraint to generating sufficient amounts of information to support the EBSA process in these countries. While this is especially true for open-ocean and deep-sea habitats, even capacity for inshore research is severely constrained in some countries. Scientific capacity needs to be improved, especially in the field of assessing biological diversity and monitoring of the marine environment. It was also suggested that greater effort needs to be placed in linking regional researchers and scientists with international cruises and research initiatives.

Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Galápagos Islands, Ecuador, from 28 to 31 August 2012)

19. The Executive Secretary convened this workshop in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS). It was hosted by the Government of Ecuador and organized with financial support from the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund). With the financial support of the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund), the CBD Secretariat commissioned a technical team to support their scientific and technical preparation for the workshop

20. The workshop participants were selected based on nominations submitted by Parties in the region of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) in response to notification 2012-061 (Ref. no. SCBD/STTM/JL/JG/79653, dated 25 April 2012), based on the selection criteria provided in the notification. Participants were also selected based on nominations from the relevant United Nations/international and regional organizations based on the same selection criteria in the notifications.

21. In order to facilitate the scientific and technical deliberations of the workshop, the Secretariat issued notification 2012-073 (Ref. no. SCBD/STTM/JM/JL/JG/79841, dated 16 May 2012), to all CBD Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, to request the submission of scientific information in support of the objectives of the workshop. The submissions of scientific information were compiled with technical support from the Duke University Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab.

22. The participants considered the geographic scope for the workshop, taking into account the GOODS, Marine Ecoregions of the World (MEOW) and Large Marine Ecosystems biogeographic classification systems. It was agreed that the scope would be the Central and South Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific. For the northern scope, consideration was given to the California Current and the natural corridors for marine mammals, fishes and birds. The area is bounded in the south by the northern boundary of the area covered by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living

Resources (CCAMLR) and in the west by the eastern boundary of the Western South Pacific regional EBSA workshop (Fiji, November 2011). Within this region, the area comprised the marine areas within national jurisdiction of the countries participating in the workshop, including Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru, as well as marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.

23. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 21 areas meeting the EBSA criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in table 2 of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/4/Add.1; further details of description are contained in the appendix to annex IV of the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/ETTP/1/4).

24. Key conclusions of the workshop on gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing areas meeting EBSA criteria include the following (further details are found in annex VII to the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/ETTP/1/4):

(a) There is a need to increase research on the distribution patterns of highly migratory and pelagic species, including non-commercial species and pelagic predators;

(b) There are notable data gaps regarding ecological connectivity between coastal areas and open-ocean and deep-sea areas, as well as connectivity within marine ecosystems;

(c) Standardized biological sampling protocols, including for genetic sampling, contaminants, and disease, should be developed;

(d) Capacity-building and training is needed to support the application of the EBSA criteria, including in areas such as taxonomy, and satellite tracking of birds and marine mammals; and

(e) Increased collaboration in research and sharing of information should be fostered among relevant international and regional organizations, including the International Maritime Organization, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), and the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS).

North Pacific Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Moscow, Russian Federation, from 25 February to 1 March 2013)

25. The Executive Secretary convened this workshop in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP), the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), the IOC⁹ Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC), and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC). It was hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation, with financial support from the Government of Japan through the Japan Biodiversity Fund. The Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund) provided financial support for the scientific and technical preparation for the workshop.

26. The workshop participants were selected based on nominations submitted by Parties in the North Pacific region in response to notifications 2012-137 (Ref. no. SCBD/STTM/JL/JG/80987, dated 6 November 2012) and 2012-139 (Ref. no. SCBD/STTM/JL/JG/80987, dated 8 November 2012), based on the selection criteria provided in these notifications. Participants were also selected based on nominations from the relevant United Nations/international and regional organizations based on the same selection criteria in the notifications.

⁹ Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

27. In order to facilitate the scientific and technical deliberations of the workshop, the Secretariat issued notification 2012-152 (Ref. no. SCBD/STTM/JM/JL/JG/81106, dated 18 December 2012), to all CBD Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, to request the submission of scientific information in support of the objectives of the workshop. The submissions of scientific information were compiled with technical support from the Duke University Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab.

28. The workshop participants agreed on the following geographic scope for the workshop: marine areas within the national jurisdictions of Mexico and the Russian Federation; marine areas beyond national jurisdiction in this region; areas to the north and east of the Philippines, beyond national jurisdiction; for the southern boundary, the northern limit of the Western South Pacific regional EBSA workshop; the north-eastern tropical Pacific area, as requested by the Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific regional EBSA workshop, was included in the workshop scope; for the northern boundary, the Bering Strait, including the Russian coastal area and the “Donut Hole” in the Bering Sea, but excluding the marine areas within the EEZ of the United States of America.

29. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 20 areas meeting the EBSA criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in table 3 of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/4/Add.1; further details of description are contained in the appendix to annex V of the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/NP/1/4).

30. In describing areas meeting the EBSA criteria, the workshop participants identified four types of areas for the purpose of increasing the clarity of description. These types were:

(a) *Spatially stable features whose positions are known and individually resolved on the maps.* Examples include individual seamounts and feeding areas for sharks and seabirds. Such areas do not have to be used all year round, nor does all the area have to be used every year. However, the feature(s) is entirely contained in the corresponding map polygons;

(b) *Spatially stable features whose individual positions are known but a number of individual cases are being grouped.* Examples include a group of coastal areas, seamounts or seabird breeding sites where the location of each is known but a single polygon on the map and corresponding description encompasses all the members of the group. The grouping may be done because there may be insufficient knowledge to evaluate each separately or the information is basically the same for all members of the group, so one description can be applied to all group members;

(c) *Spatially stable features whose individual positions are not known.* Examples include areas where coral or sponge concentrations are likely, based on, for example, modeling of suitable habitats, but information is insufficient to specify the locations of each individual concentration. Each such area may be represented by a single map polygon and description, but the entire area inside the polygon is *not* to be interpreted as filled with the feature(s) meeting the criteria. Narrative about these areas should stress the importance of getting better information on the spatial distribution of these features;

(d) *Features that are inherently not spatially fixed.* An example is the North Pacific frontal transition zone. The position of this front moves seasonally and among years. The map polygon for such a feature should include the full range occupied by the front (or other feature) during a typical year. However, the description and its narrative should describe seasonal movement of the key feature(s). The text for description should also make very clear that at any given time, the ecological importance usually is highest wherever the feature is located at that time and often decreases as distance from the feature increases. It may even be the case that at any given time some parts of the total area contained in the polygon are ecologically little different from areas outside the polygon.

31. Key conclusions of the workshop on gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing areas meeting EBSA criteria include the following (further details are found in annex VIII to the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/NP/1/4):

(a) There are notable information gaps on areas such as fisheries data; species diversity (benthic and pelagic); species ecology, abundance and seasonality; and hydrodynamics and geomorphological information;

(b) In general, models used to predict the potential distribution of specific taxa (e.g., corals and octocorals, seabirds) often are not field-validated. In some cases, model results are extrapolated from distributional data collected at global scales, which can result in model over- or underprediction, outlining the need for caution when using this information in applying EBSA criteria;

(c) Enhanced collaboration is needed at the regional level, including among government agencies, policymakers, industry, and local stakeholders, to better share scientific information (including information on marine areas beyond national jurisdiction), harmonize data collection approaches, and foster a culture of regional collaboration in the context of marine science;

(d) There is a need for further clarity in applying the EBSA criteria, including the need for specific guidance on how to separate, if necessary, the seabed from the water column for description of EBSA sites, and how to achieve consistency and uniformity in applying the EBSA criteria; and

(e) Capacity-building at regional levels should be promoted, specifically in the areas of deep-sea oceanographic exploration, open ocean biology, taxonomy, oceanographic and geographic data analysis methods and tools.

South-Eastern Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs
(Swakopmund, Namibia, from 8 to 12 April 2013)

32. The Executive Secretary convened this workshop, in collaboration with the Abidjan Convention Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO), with financial support from the Governments of Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) of Australia was commissioned, with financial support from the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund), to provide technical support to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the scientific and technical preparation for the workshop.

33. The workshop participants were selected based on nominations submitted by Parties in the South-Eastern Atlantic region in response to notifications 2012-133 (Ref. no. SCBD/STTM/JL/JG/80877, dated 2 October 2012) and 2012-134 (Ref. no. SCBD/STTM/JL/JG/80877, dated 5 October 2012), based on the selection criteria provided in these notifications. Participants were also selected based on nominations from the relevant United Nations/international and regional organizations based on the same selection criteria in the notifications.

34. In order to facilitate the scientific and technical deliberations of the workshop, the Secretariat issued notification 2012-153 (Ref. no. SCBD/STTM/JM/JL/JG/81106, dated 18 December 2012), to all CBD Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, to request the submission of scientific information in support of the objectives of the workshop. The submissions of scientific information were compiled with technical support from CSIRO.

35. The workshop participants agreed on the following geographic scope for this workshop: marine areas within national jurisdictions of countries along the western coast of Africa; marine areas beyond national jurisdiction in this region; for the northern boundary, the southern boundary of the area considered by the North-East Atlantic regional EBSA workshop; for the western boundary, the eastern boundary of the area considered by the Wider Caribbean and Southern Mid-Atlantic regional EBSA workshop; for the southern boundary, the northern boundary of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR); for the eastern boundary, the western boundary of the area near South Africa considered by the Southern Indian Ocean regional EBSA workshop.

36. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 45 areas meeting the EBSA criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in table 4 of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/4/Add.1; further details of description are contained in the appendix to annex IV of the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SEA/1/4).

37. Key conclusions of the workshop on gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing areas meeting EBSA criteria include the following (further details are found in annex VII to the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SEA/1/4):

(a) Further scientific research is needed on habitat classification and mapping, potentially sensitive habitats (e.g., seamounts, cold-water coral communities and submarine canyons; muds and fluvial inputs), sensitivity mapping for the Benguela Current LME region, benthic fauna in general (including infauna and epifauna), and geomorphological information;

(b) In general, countries need to be encouraged to better share scientific information and enhance the accessibility of scientific data/information. Beyond scientists, it is necessary to promote information-sharing to the level of policymakers, industry and local stakeholders; and

(c) Regional efforts to address scientific gaps and capacity-building needs for marine biodiversity conservation should be linked to various global-scale initiatives/programmes, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF) ABNJ project, UNGA Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (Regular Process), and FAO's process for vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs).

Arctic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Helsinki, Finland, from 3 to 7 March 2014)

38. The Executive Secretary convened this workshop with financial support from the Government of Finland. The Government of Finland hosted the workshop and also provided financial support for the scientific and technical preparation for the workshop.

39. The workshop participants were selected based on nominations submitted by Parties in the Arctic region in response to notification 2013-085 (Ref. no. SCBD/SAM/DC/JL/JG/82648 (dated 23 September 2013), based on the selection criteria provided in the notification. Participants were also selected based on nominations from the relevant United Nations/international and regional organizations based on the same selection criteria in the notification.

40. In order to facilitate the scientific and technical deliberations of the workshop, the Secretariat issued notification 2013-106 (Ref. no. SCBD/SAM/DC/JL/JG/82923, dated 21 November 2013), to all CBD Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, to request the submission of scientific information in support of the objectives of the workshop. The submissions of scientific information were compiled with technical support from the Duke University Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab.

41. The workshop participants agreed on the following geographic scope for the workshop:

(a) The regional geographical delineation of the biodiversity working group of the Arctic Council, Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF). This constituted the starting geographic scope of the workshop;

(b) Marine areas within the national jurisdiction of the Russian Federation, as proposed by the experts from the Russian Federation based on national processes, except for the areas already considered by the North Pacific regional workshop described above;

(c) Marine areas within the national jurisdiction (200 nautical miles, nm) of Canada, Greenland (Kingdom of Denmark), Norway, and the United States of America were excluded from consideration by this workshop;

(d) In the Pacific, the Bering Strait was taken as a southern boundary for this workshop as no additional information was identified to complement previous work done by the North Pacific workshop referred to above;

(e) In the Atlantic, the CAFF boundary was retained as the southern boundary for the workshop. It was noted that some of the areas beyond national jurisdiction in central Arctic waters had been included in the scope of the Joint OSPAR/NEAFC/CBD Scientific Workshop on the Identification of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas in the North-East Atlantic (Hyères, France, 8-9 September 2011). The participants agreed that the work at the current workshop would complement previous work in the area of overlap.

42. The workshop participants noted that the entire Arctic Ocean has important ecological features that, when viewed on a global scale, justify a higher degree of risk aversion in the Arctic than would be the norm for many lower-latitude marine regions, if management is to keep human uses sustainable and adequately protect biodiversity.

43. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 11 areas meeting the EBSA criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in table 5 of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/4/Add.1; further details of description are contained in the appendix to annex VIII of the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/1/5).

44. Key conclusions of the workshop on gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing areas meeting EBSA criteria include the following (further details are found in annex X to the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/1/5):

(a) Challenges posed in consideration of ecological processes when application of the EBSA criteria by the workshop cannot extend into marine areas within national jurisdiction;

(b) Challenges posed to indigenous and local communities in providing input, including difficulty in describing transboundary areas meeting the EBSA criteria (especially when they are residents of more than one country) and the lack of capacity of indigenous and local communities to participate in regional workshops or to conduct their own processes for identifying EBSAs; and

(c) The lack of adopted socio-cultural criteria with regards to the EBSA criteria, which prevented the workshop participants from considering available information on several types of areas that are of importance to indigenous and local communities in the Arctic, such as customary use areas, areas of social and economic importance, cultural heritage sites, subsistence use areas and sacred sites.

North-West Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Montreal, Canada, from 24 to 28 March 2014)

45. The Executive Secretary convened this workshop with financial support from the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada hosted the workshop and also provided financial support for the scientific and technical preparation for the workshop.

46. The workshop participants were selected based on nominations submitted by Parties in the North-West Atlantic region in response to notification 2014-011 (Ref. no. SCBD/SAM/DC/JL/JG/83094, dated 21 January 2014), based on the selection criteria provided in this notification. Participants were also selected based on nominations from the relevant United Nations/international and regional organizations based on the same selection criteria in the notifications.

47. In order to facilitate the scientific and technical deliberations of the workshop, the Secretariat issued notification 2014-018 (Ref. no. SCBD/SAM/DC/JL/JA/JM/83129, dated 31 January 2014), to all CBD Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, to request the submission of scientific information in support of the objectives of the workshop. The submissions of scientific information were compiled with technical support from the Duke University Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab.

48. The workshop participants agreed on the following geographic scope for the workshop:

(a) To the west, the boundary would be the EEZs of the United States of America and Canada;

(b) To the north, the point where the EEZs of Canada and Greenland meet;

(c) To the east, the western boundary of the Joint OSPAR/NEAFC/CBD workshop, which matches the western limit of the OSPAR Convention and NEAFC Regulatory areas, generally following 42 degrees West longitude;

(d) In the southeast, the workshop considered an area containing a subset of hydrothermal vents, bounded in the north by the OSPAR Maritime Area and in the south by an area beyond which known vents were inactive;

(e) To the south, this workshop decided to extend its consideration of benthic features down to at least the southern boundary of the New England and Corner Rise seamount chains and clusters, to complement, with additional scientific information, the area that was already assessed at the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic regional workshop to facilitate the description of EBSAs (28 February to 2 March 2012, Recife).

49. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 7 areas meeting EBSA criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in table 6 of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/4/Add.1; further details of description are contained in the appendix to annex IV of the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/2/4).

50. Key conclusions of the workshop on gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing areas meeting EBSA criteria include the following (further details are found in annex VI to the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/2/4):

(a) The lack of consistent, region-wide surveys of biological data on marine species across taxa and trophic groups, given that comparable surveys of biological data in the region are sparse and often extremely limited in spatial extent and temporal representation;

(b) Limited data on deep-sea offshore habitats and benthic communities, especially on the slopes of the Flemish Cap below 2500 m and the absence of data in areas not accessible to groundfish surveys on the Flemish Cap; and

(c) Limited information on a number of features, relative to the EBSA criteria, including seamount clusters (especially with regards to details of threatened, endangered and/or declining species), shelf edges and canyons, hydrothermal vents, and migratory corridors for marine mammals in certain areas.

Mediterranean Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of EBSAs (Málaga, Spain, from 7 to 11 April 2014)

51. The Executive Secretary convened this workshop, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), with logistical and technical support provided by the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med) and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas. The workshop was hosted by the Government of Spain with financial support from the Government of Spain, the UNEP/MAP Mediterranean Trust Fund and the Government of Monaco. The European Commission provided financial support to the scientific and technical preparation for the workshop.

52. The workshop participants were selected based on nominations submitted by Parties in the region of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution, in response to notification 2014-009 (Ref. no. SCBD/SAM/DC/JL/JG/83051, dated 22 January 2014), based on the selection criteria provided in this notification. In consultation with the UNEP/MAP Secretariat, participants were also selected based on nominations from the relevant United Nations/international and regional organizations based on the same selection criteria in the notifications.

53. In order to facilitate the scientific and technical deliberations of the workshop, the Secretariat issued notification 2014-016 (Ref. no. SCBD/SAM/DC/JL/JA/JM/83100, dated 31 January 2014), to all CBD Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, to request the submission of scientific information in support of the objectives of the workshop. The submissions of scientific information were compiled with technical support from the Duke University Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab.

54. The workshop participants agreed to consider, as the geographic scope for the workshop, the area of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution (as defined in Article 1 of the Barcelona Convention) as well as its Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean.

55. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 17 areas meeting the EBSA criteria (refer to summary description of these areas in table 7 of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/4/Add.1; further details of description are contained in the appendix to annex IV of the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/3/4).

56. Key conclusions of the workshop on gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing areas meeting EBSA criteria include the following (further details are found in annex VI to the workshop report, UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/3/4):

- (a) The need to identify connectivity corridors between different parts of the region;
- (b) Concerns that sufficient information was not available for certain subregions or basins, and the recognition of specific important sites that could also have been described as meeting the EBSA criteria but that were lacking sufficient scientific evidence;

(c) Limited capacity in certain parts of the region with regards to taxonomy, benthic and pelagic species diversity, cetology, marine endemism, invasive species, deep sea habitats, benthic habitats (especially biogenic habitats), turtles, species ecology, abundance and seasonality, marine birds, seamount connectivity, the roles and functions of canyons, hydrodynamics, geology and geomorphology, physical and chemical parameters, and coralligenous ecosystems; and

(d) The need for greater capacity-building to support scientific research on coastal habitats and species such as seagrass meadows, coralligenous formations, maërl formations, and vermetid/algal platforms, especially in the southern and eastern Mediterranean.

III. PROGRESS REPORT ON COLLABORATION TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE EBSA REPOSITORY AND INFORMATION-SHARING MECHANISM

57. Pursuant to paragraph 16 of decision XI/17, this section summarizes the progress made in the further development of the EBSA prototype repository and information-sharing mechanism into a fully functional repository and information-sharing mechanism so that they can fully serve the purpose called for in paragraph 39 of decision X/29.

58. This activity was undertaken, through the financial support from the Government of Germany, in collaboration with Parties and other Governments, and relevant organizations, in particular those involved in the organization of the regional workshops on description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, as explained in the previous section.

59. For the purpose of this task, the following distinction was applied to differentiate between the EBSA repository and information sharing mechanism, pursuant to paragraph 16 of decision XI/17:

(a) The EBSA repository contains:

- (i) Reports on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, prepared by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice for the purpose set out in decisions X/29 and XI/17, that the Conference of the Parties has requested the Executive Secretary to include in the repository as source of information for Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations; and
- (ii) Scientific and technical information and experience relating to the application of the criteria for EBSAs, or of other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria in areas within national jurisdiction, that Parties and other Governments have provided for inclusion in the repository, consistent with paragraph 18 of decision XI/17;

(b) The EBSA information sharing mechanism includes:

- (i) Reports prepared by the Subsidiary Body consistent with paragraph 12 of decision XI/17;
- (ii) The results of the regional workshops convened pursuant to decisions X/29 (paragraph 36) and XI/17 (paragraph 12);
- (iii) Scientific and technical information and experience relating to the application of the criteria for EBSAs or other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria in areas within national jurisdiction that Parties and other Governments have provided for

inclusion in information sharing mechanism, consistent with paragraph 18 of decision XI/17; and

- (iv) Other relevant scientific and technical information related to the areas described to meet the EBSA criteria; and
- (v) Links with similar initiatives, such as FAO's work on vulnerable marine ecosystems (decision X/29, paragraph 39).

60. In order to increase the accessibility to the information contained in the EBSA repository and information sharing mechanism as described above, the EBSA portal website (<http://www.cbd.int/ebsa/>) was developed as a gateway to the EBSA repository and information sharing mechanism. The EBSA portal website thus aims to facilitate the use of available scientific and technical information related to areas meeting EBSA criteria by a wide range of stakeholders, and to convey the outcomes of the regional workshops on description of EBSAs in a clearly understandable way. It also intends to improve general understanding about the EBSA process, facilitate participation in future regional/subregional EBSA workshops, and promote the application of the EBSA criteria at the national level.

IV. PROGRESS REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT OF EBSA TRAINING MANUAL THAT INTEGRATES TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

61. Pursuant to paragraph 40 of decision X/29, EBSA training manual and modules, as contained in the document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/9, were developed to facilitate the capacity development with regard to the scientific description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria.

62. Pursuant to decision XI/17, the development of further training materials on the use of traditional knowledge in the application of the EBSA criteria is under way, with the aim of providing:

- (a) Guidance on enhancing the understanding by indigenous and local communities of the EBSA criteria and the application of the criteria, as well as awareness on how the EBSA description process can further enhance the existing efforts by these communities in their conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;

- (b) Practical guidance for collecting and documenting traditional knowledge, including the types of research questions this knowledge can answer, issues related to building respectful partnerships with knowledge holders on the ground, prior informed consent, ownership of knowledge, and other important considerations;

- (c) Explanations of methodologies used for documenting traditional knowledge, and for integrating contemporary science and traditional knowledge to build new "hybrid" knowledge systems; and

- (d) Detailed and practical case studies from different regions of the world to provide insights on various contexts in integrating traditional knowledge in the application of the EBSA criteria.

V. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATION

63. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice may wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties, at its twelfth meeting, adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decisions X/29 and XI/27 on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs),

1. *Welcomes* the summary reports prepared by the Subsidiary Body at its eighteenth meeting,¹⁰ and the reports of the regional workshops for describing ecological and biologically significant marine areas held in seven regions: Southern Indian Ocean (Flic en Flac, Mauritius, 31 July to 3 August 2012; UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SIO/1/4); Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific (Galapagos, Ecuador, 28 to 31 August 2012; UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/ETTP/1/4); North Pacific (Moscow, Russian Federation, 25 February to 1 March 2013; UNEP/CBD/EBSA/NP/1/4); South-Eastern Atlantic (Swakopmund, Namibia, 8 to 12 April 2013; UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SEA/1/4); Arctic (Helsinki, Finland, 3 to 7 March 2014; UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/1/5); North-West Atlantic (Montreal, Canada, 24 to 28 March 2014; UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/2/4); and Mediterranean (Málaga, Spain, 3 to 7 April 2014; UNEP/CBD/EBSA/WS/2014/3/4);

2. *Expresses its gratitude* to all donors, hosting countries and collaborating organizations, involved in the organization of the regional workshops referred to above;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to include the summary reports prepared by the Subsidiary Body at its eighteenth meeting, annexed to the present decision, in the EBSA repository, and to submit the summary reports to the United Nations General Assembly and particularly its Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group, as well as relevant Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations in line with the purpose and procedures set out in decisions X/29 and XI/17;

4. *Urges* Parties and other Governments to undertake national exercises to identify areas meeting EBSA criteria, for areas under national jurisdiction not covered by the regional workshops convened under the Convention or related processes, and to make this information, and other relevant information, available through the EBSA repository or information sharing mechanism;

5. *Encourages* Parties and other Governments to make use of the scientific information regarding the descriptions of areas meeting EBSA criteria, including the information in the EBSA repository and information sharing mechanism, when carrying out marine spatial planning, development of representative networks of marine protected areas, and application of other area-based management measures in marine and coastal areas, with a view to contributing to national efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

6. *Invites* Parties, other Governments and competent intergovernmental organizations to provide, for inclusion in the EBSA information sharing mechanism, scientific and technical information, including georeferenced information, on threats and stressors on marine biodiversity as well as existing conservation and management measures in areas described as meeting the EBSA criteria contained in the EBSA repository, and *requests* the Executive Secretary to facilitate the compilation and sharing of this information through the EBSA information sharing mechanism;

¹⁰ To be developed by SBSTTA on the basis of UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/4/Add.1.

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, to organize regional and/or subregional training workshops on the compilation and use of scientific and technical information contained in the EBSA repository and information sharing mechanism, towards the enhancement of conservation and management measures within the context of marine spatial planning with a view to contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to report on progress to a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

8. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations and scientific groups, to develop practical options for further work on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, including systematic assessment of scientific information, use of traditional knowledge, and other approaches at local, national, subregional or regional scales, building upon the existing scientific guidance and drawing upon the lessons from the series of regional workshops for describing areas that meet the EBSA criteria, and report on progress to a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
