SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE

SOI GLOBAL DIALOGUE

with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies

Seoul Outcome +2

THE 2ND MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE GLOBAL DIALOGUE WITH REGIONAL SEAS ORGANIZATIONS AND REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES ON ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Executive Summary

1. The 2nd Meeting of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals was convened by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Seoul from 10 to 13 April 2018. Financial support was provided by the Government of the Republic of Korea (through the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea, Korea Maritime Institute and the Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation), the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund), the Government of Sweden and the European Union. The meeting was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, and many other international and regional partners.
2. Participants comprised representatives of Regional Seas Organizations (RSOs), Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs), including Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), and relevant United Nations/international organizations/initiatives, as well as experts from national governments and agencies and non-governmental organizations.
3. This meeting focused on the main objectives of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue, as set by its first meeting – enhancing cross sectoral collaboration among RSOs and RFBs, with a view to further strengthening their complementary roles in supporting national implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
4. Specifically, participants were provided with an overview of the evolving global ocean policy-scape, in particular regarding developments since the first meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue, noting the relevant outcomes of the 2016 UN Biodiversity Conference, the 2017 UN Ocean Conference and the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly, including in relation to the convening of an *intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction* (General Assembly resolution 72/249), as well as the second World Ocean Assessment, the 2016 and 2017 sessions of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), the 32nd session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).
5. Participants noted that the results of the first meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue, the Seoul Outcome, has been presented to diverse policy makers and stakeholders at various relevant global fora/processes, as noted above, increasing awareness on the important role played by regional organizations/bodies/initiatives in facilitating and supporting national efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and SDGs, as well as the many opportunities to enhance cross-sectoral regional cooperation.
6. Participants reviewed the continuing progress made in enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional scale and discussed the contributions of regional organizations/bodies to global processes. They noted that one-size-fits-all approaches may not be appropriate given that political, economic, geographic, social and environmental characteristics can vary widely, both within and among regions. They also noted the varying mandates and geographic coverages of different regional organizations. Nevertheless, they stressed that many experiences and lessons learned are transferable and applicable to other regional contexts. Participants also highlighted that better inter-sectoral coordination among ministries and agencies at the national level would significantly enhance inter-sectoral coordination at the regional and global levels. It is also important to make adequate financial and human resources available to initiate and/or expand cross-sectoral regional collaborative activities.
7. Participants shared their experiences and lessons learned in regional-scale cooperation under the theme of "unlocking the potential for transformational change towards sustainability." In particular, they focused on discussing how cross-sectoral cooperation can enhance the application of the ecosystem approach/ecosystem-based management, the effectiveness of area-based management tools, the prevention, reduction and mitigation of the impacts of pollution, including marine debris, environmental monitoring and data/information sharing.
8. These discussions identified many existing complementary capacities, resources and activities within regional organizations to address these issues and to provide a sound basis to enhance regional cooperation and coordination,

also supporting national-level implementation. As well, it was emphasized that many regional organizations either currently have, or are moving towards, integration of approaches and activities with a broader ecosystem focus, depending on their respective mandates. A number of clear challenges and capacity gaps were also identified in many regions, requiring additional support and capacity building. However, the participants noted that addressing these challenges and gaps could yield significant benefits to countries, regions and the global community through enhanced implementation and assessment.

9. Participants appreciated the rich variety of experiences, progress and challenges shared at the meeting, noting the usefulness of sharing good practice and knowledge through the SOI Global Dialogue, with the possibility of being complemented by regional-level dialogues.
10. Furthermore, the meeting encouraged RSOs and RFBs to consider the creation and/or further development of continuous cross-sectoral dialogues at the regional scale and to identify key areas and modalities of cooperation and collaboration.
11. Participants noted that the development of regional organizations/bodies/initiatives and the level of existing collaboration and joint working arrangements within and between regions could vary significantly. In this regard, participants noted that strengthening the capacity of regional organizations to conduct their core work, where needed, will provide a stronger basis for cross-sectoral collaboration and cooperation among regional organizations.
12. Participants highlighted that the SOI Global Dialogue has facilitated cross-sectoral engagement among many regional organizations/bodies. Efforts to promote cooperation among RSOs, RFBs/RFMOs, Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) projects/programmes and regional science organizations are ongoing, with many new examples emerging since the first meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue. An important task could be to link available resources, such as capacity development and institutional strengthening, with those organizations and regions most in need of support. Continuous dialogue and communication among similar global initiatives on promoting regional cross-sectoral cooperation can ensure synergies and complementarity for the effective delivery of long-term outcomes.
13. Participants developed possible roadmaps, through regional group discussions (e.g., Africa and Indian Ocean, South and Central Pacific, Wider Caribbean and Central America, East Asia and North Pacific), which have identified means to put the "Seoul Outcomes" into concrete practice and further enhance cross-sectoral collaboration at the regional scale, including regional dialogues/partnership initiatives. Requests were made for the CBD Secretariat, UNEP and FAO to help engage financial and technical partnerships with interested donors, partners and experts that are necessary to facilitate the implementation of various approaches and priority actions at the regional scale, as identified in these roadmaps.
14. Participants discussed potential inter-sessional activities, with a particular focus on enhancing the role of regional organizations/bodies in supporting national reporting of progress in achieving global goals and targets.
15. Participants expressed appreciation to the CBD Secretariat, UNEP and FAO for their on-going support for the SOI Global Dialogue, and requested the informal working group, which has been functioning since the first meeting, continues to assist in preparations for future meetings of the SOI Global Dialogue and facilitate the implementation of intersessional activities.
16. Participants expressed their deepest gratitude to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for hosting the meeting and to the local organizers (the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea, the Korea Maritime Institute and the Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation) for successfully organizing the meeting and for their hospitality.
17. Participants also welcomed continued support from the Republic of Korea to organize additional meetings of the SOI Global Dialogue on a regular basis, in collaboration with relevant partners and stakeholders.
18. Likewise, participants expressed appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Government of Japan, the Government of Sweden and the European Union for their generous financial support, and invited the further support of these donors as well as other donors.

EVOLVING GLOBAL OCEAN POLICY-SCAPE:
DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE FIRST MEETING OF THE SOI GLOBAL DIALOGUE IN 2016

UN Biodiversity Conference 2016

1. In the Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-Being, adopted during the high-level segment of the 2016 United Nations Biodiversity Conference, ministers and other heads of delegation encouraged closer cooperation and synergies among relevant organizations of the United Nations system, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization, multilateral environmental agreements, and, as appropriate, other organizations and international initiatives and processes, including those at the regional level.
2. The high-level segment roundtable on mainstreaming biodiversity in the fisheries sector during the 2016 UN Biodiversity Conference, which took place in Cancun on 3 December 2016, noted the efforts made by the Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat, UNEP and FAO, as well as donors, to host and co-organize the SOI Global Dialogue with RSOs and RFBs, the first global meeting of its nature. The roundtable also: (i) highlighted the essential role played by regional organizations in supporting and facilitating actions by national governments for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems; (ii) emphasized that enhanced cooperation and collaboration at the regional level need to be supported by continual exchange of information and lessons learned, exploring shared objectives, and addressing issues of common interest; (iii) and noted with appreciation the commitment of the Republic of Korea to continue to organize, on a regular basis, meetings of the SOI Global Dialogue with RSOs and RFBs, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

UN Ocean Conference 2017

3. The 2017 UN Ocean Conference, a historic event with thousands of high-level participants from UN Member States, the UN system and other stakeholders, raised global awareness on the importance of our ocean and the challenges it is facing, and adopted a declaration entitled "Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action", setting a roadmap for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.
4. The Call for Action called upon all stakeholders to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development by strengthening cooperation, policy coherence and coordination among institutions at all levels, including between and among international organizations, regional and subregional organizations and institutions, arrangements and programmes.
5. The UN Ocean Conference also resulted in more than 1400 voluntary commitments by Governments, international organizations and other stakeholders in areas related to mangroves, coral reefs, ocean acidification, marine and coastal ecosystems management, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, sustainable blue economy, scientific knowledge, research capacity and transfer of marine technology and implementation of international law, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The SOI Global Dialogue was also registered as a voluntary commitment.
6. An online platform for the "Communities of Ocean Action"[1] was established as a follow-up mechanism on the voluntary commitments. To support the work of the Communities, designated focal points have been identified for each thematic area from among those actors that have registered voluntary commitments, who will work together with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).
7. The focal points will also work together with the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, appointed in September 2017, with a view to galvanizing concerted efforts to follow up on the outcomes of the UN Ocean Conference in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, thus maintaining the momentum for action to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

1 https://oceanconference.un.org/coa

71st Session of the UN General Assembly

8. The UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 71/257 of 23 December 2016 noted with appreciation the work of SOI under the CBD, and noted in this regard the first meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue with RSOs and RFBs on accelerating progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, held in Seoul from 26 to 29 September 2016.

UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

9. The legal framework for marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, as complemented by other relevant instruments, was recalled.

10. The UNGA, in its resolution 72/249 of 24 December 2017, decided to convene an Intergovernmental Conference to elaborate the text of an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. In accordance with resolution 72/249, the Conference will address the topics identified in the package agreed in 2011, namely the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular, together and as a whole, marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits, measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments, and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology. The first session of the Intergovernmental Conference will take place from 4 to 17 September 2018, the second and third sessions in 2019, and the fourth session in the first half of 2020.

11. The second World Ocean Assessment (WOA) of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects, which is in its second cycle (2017-2020), provides an opportunity for incorporation of regional knowledge and information, including through the nomination of experts by regional organizations.

12. The Resumed Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), held from 23 to 27 May 2016, agreed on a broad range of recommendations, including on the continued need to undertake regular performance reviews of RFMOs and develop best practice guidelines for conducting performance reviews and implementing their results. The FAO is currently implementing a project titled 'Overview of activities and developments of RFBs and RFMOs from 2000 to 2016', which entails an analytical synopsis of the work carried out by RFBs/RFMOs since the year 2000, including achievements, failures and current challenges. Among the indicators used for evaluation is international cooperation, including cooperative frameworks established between RFBs/RFMOs as well as between RFBs/RFMOs and relevant regional seas conventions and intergovernmental organizations.

UN Environment Assembly

13. UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution 2/10, adopted in May 2016, invited member States and regional seas conventions and action plans, in cooperation, as appropriate, with other relevant organizations and forums, such as regional fisheries management organizations, to work towards the implementation of, and reporting on, the different ocean-related SDGs and associated targets, and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

14. UNEA 2 also requested UNEP to provide, upon request by member States, technical advice on marine protected areas (MPAs) and on the application of other spatial measures in cooperation with competent international and regional forums, including multilateral environmental agreements and RFBs.

15. Priority 1 of a UNEP's Executive Director's proposal on the revision of UNEP's 2011 marine and coastal strategy, pursuant to Resolution 2/10 on oceans and seas, highlights the need to strengthen collaboration with other regional bodies and to enhance initiatives with RFBs and LME projects to advance the implementation of the ocean-related SDGs.

32nd Session of FAO Committee on Fisheries

16. The 32nd session FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), which took place in July 2016, welcomed the initiative of CBD, FAO and UNEP, and expressed its appreciation to the Republic of Korea for organizing a meeting of SOI Global Dialogue with RSOs and RFBs in September 2016 in Seoul.

UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

17. On 5 December 2017, UNGA Resolution 72/73 recalled the cross-cutting role of ocean science in SDG 14, and proclaimed the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030, calling for the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) to prepare an implementation plan for the Decade in consultation with member States, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and bodies of the UN, other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and relevant stakeholders between 2018 and 2020. The initiative aims to generate knowledge of the ocean system, including its biodiversity and the seabed; develop a comprehensive evidence base and capacities for ecosystem-based management; save lives and reduce risks from extreme weather events and ocean-related hazards; enhance ocean observing network, data system and other infrastructures; transform the scientific and technical capacity of the ocean stakeholders; and enhance cooperation, coordination and communications between stakeholders. The Decade's vision is *"Ocean science for the future we want".*

REVIEW OF PROGRESS MADE FOR ENHANCING CROSS-SECTORAL COOPERATION AT THE REGIONAL SCALE AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/BODIES TO GLOBAL PROCESSES

1. Since regions vary greatly in their political, economic, geographic, social and environmental characteristics, one-size-fits-all approaches may not be appropriate. Nevertheless, across the variety of regions, there are many experiences and lessons learnt that are transferable and applicable to other regional contexts.

2. However, some challenges for cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional scale and the contribution of regional organizations/bodies to global processes remain to be addressed, bearing in mind the diversity in mandates and geographic scopes of various organizations. Geo-political complexities in certain regions act as a continuing barrier to more accelerated progress in regional coordination and cross-sectoral work. The lack of common goals, guiding principles and approaches, availability of and/or access to scientific information, human resources as well as funding may further hinder progress. Many hope that some of these challenges might be addressed in the internationally legally binding instrument for conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction that is currently being negotiated. Inter-sectoral coordination between ministries and agencies at the national level will enhance inter-sectoral coordination at the regional and global levels. Adequate financial and human resources are required to facilitate initiating/expanding cross-sectoral policies and collaborative activities at different levels. From a technical perspective, addressing the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification at the regional level continues to be a challenge that may require further support at a global level.

3. In several regions, there are a multiplicity of bodies and agencies involved in marine issues. This is driven by the economic and geo-political realities in the regions, as well as historic funding streams. However, with proper coordination, such complexity could be strength rather than a weakness. For instance, various fishery bodies in the Caribbean have developed a large number of policies on sustainable fisheries through joint working groups.

4. A good example of such a coordinated approach to funding is the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems + (CLME) Strategic Action Programme (2015-2025), which is a key output for the first UN Development Programme (UNDP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) CLME Project (2009-2014). Numerous sister UN agencies, global and regional institutions and organizations, and more than 20 countries from the CLME+ region contributed to the development of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP). This helped to avoid the duplication of efforts and increased the probability of the bid for funding being successful. The SAP serves as an umbrella programme, encompassing existing initiatives as well as being open to new projects. An interim coordination mechanism has been established to facilitate the creation of a global partnership for the protection of the marine resources of the wider Caribbean region and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed among the relevant organizations. The SAP is now encompassing action towards the implementation of the SDGs. However, a need for diversified funding at sustainable levels was identified as essential for long-term success. A similar experience was also provided by the Yellow Sea LME.

5. By providing information and scientific advice in a harmonized manner, regional science bodies can help individual countries and regional organizations address the challenges arising from limited financial and human resources. An example was provided by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), whose fisheries and ecosystem overviews are a key mechanism for delivering advice on ecosystem-based fishery management and ecosystem-based management. In the Indian Ocean, collaboration between environment, fisheries and science bodies was also highlighted. In the central Pacific, the establishment of a Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS) is currently in development.

6. Holistic and integrated region-wide assessments have been demonstrated by regions such as the Baltic (HELCOM) and the North West Pacific, as a good tool for bringing together sectors with an interest in understanding specific aspects of the quality of the respective seas, as well as for preparing comprehensive reports on the state of regional seas.

7. One example of cross-sectoral collaboration in the context of the preparation of reports on the state of the regional seas is 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Report. Although the report was produced by UNEP/Mediterranean

Action Plan (MAP), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) led the assessments on the basis of which the relevant fisheries-related indicators were developed.

8. Developing generic frameworks for cooperation between organizations could be helpful in facilitating or accelerating the application of the ecosystem approach/ecosystem-based management.

9. The recent MoU between the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) and the FAO on behalf of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) seeks to promote collaboration through, as appropriate, joint elaboration, fundraising for and implementation of projects on specific issues of common interest.

10. The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO) has established cooperative arrangements with the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), while an MoU with the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) is currently being negotiated. SPRFMO noted that although much of its focus so far has been on other RFMOs, opportunities exist to leverage expertise and experiences from other regional organizations in the Pacific.

11. The Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention) has established a collaborative MoU with the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) for technical support on research and for promoting science-policy dialogue, including for reporting on SDG 14, Targets 5 and 2. An MoU has also been concluded with the IOC to foster collaboration in policy and practice, including towards the development of a protocol on integrated coastal zone management (ICZM). In addition, the MoU between the Nairobi Convention and the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) seeks to provide a framework of cooperation and understanding and to facilitate collaboration between the Parties to further their shared goals and objectives regarding the conservation, protection, enhancement and support of nature and natural resources, including biological diversity in the Western Indian Ocean. A concept note on strengthening cooperation and collaboration between the two regimes in support of SDGs 1, 5 and 14 was presented and approved by the Nairobi Convention Focal Points in November 2017.

12. The GFCM has concluded an MoU with UNEP/MAP, which includes five areas of cooperation: (i) promotion of the ecosystem-based approach for the conservation of marine ecosystems and the sustainable use of marine living resources; (ii) mitigation of the impacts of fisheries and aquaculture on marine habitats and species; (iii) identification, protection and management of marine areas of particular importance in the Mediterranean Sea; (iv) integrated maritime policy with a special emphasis on marine and coastal spatial planning; and (v) legal and policy cooperation. The importance of the MoU for accelerating the two bodies' progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets was highlighted. The GFCM has also concluded an MoU with the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest Convention), which is accompanied by several other collaborative activities, including on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, fisheries indicators and sustainable aquaculture.

13. An MoU has been concluded between the Bucharest Convention and UNEP/MAP. The two Secretariats collaborated closely on the issue of marine litter: they have cooperated in delivering the EU-funded 'Marine Litter MED project', in addition to assistance of UNEP/MAP to develop a Draft Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Black Sea and a Draft Marine Litter Monitoring Programme. The two Secretariats have also collaborated on indicators and integrated coastal zone management issues.

14. The need to develop collaboration mechanism between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea and to seek for relevant funding was emphasized. The focus of such cooperation could include invasive species, ballast water management, MPAs and other issues of concern between the Tehran and Bucharest Convention' Secretariats.

15. The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) noted that cooperation had developed well with the international regimes dealing with seabirds and turtles, namely ACAP, and the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC). They also highlighted collaborative and cooperative efforts with other institutions in the fisheries sector such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA), as well as with the fisheries agencies of the coastal states in the eastern Pacific Ocean, including an ongoing GEF-FAO areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) pilot project to monitor and sample shark landings in Central America. However, cross-sectoral collaboration with

entities such as RSOs was hindered due to the lack of such organizations with overlapping areas of competence for significant portions of the IATTC convention area, with the exception of CPPS which has a mandate in the south eastern Pacific Ocean.

16. In the context of the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region (Abidjan Convention) has developed collaborative action at the LME level with regard to sustainable ecosystem-based fisheries management and, to a more limited extent, with regard to land-based sources of marine pollution and the development of the oil and gas sector.

17. The Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership, which is a multi-stakeholder initiative established within the framework of the Abidjan Convention, is focused on increasing the awareness and action of governments, the private sector and local communities in West and Central Africa, to slow and reverse the over-harvesting of aquatic mammals, birds and reptiles for human consumption, wildlife trade, fishing bait or other uses, many of which are illegal or unregulated.

18. Another example of cross-sectoral collaboration is the 'Global Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation in the ABNJ Program' (Common Oceans ABNJ Program), supported by GEF, is a five-year Program that started its activities in early 2014. With FAO as coordinating agency, the Program is working in close collaboration with two other GEF implementing agencies, UNEP and the World Bank, as well as other executing partners, including RFMOs, national governments, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

19. In the Western Indian Ocean, the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) was cited as a potential tool for collaboration because EBSAs cut across all different sectors and jurisdictions.

20. In terms of inter-regional sectoral cooperation, the Kobe process was mentioned with respect to tuna RFMOs, as a useful tool for sharing of expertise in areas of science, monitoring, control and surveillance. Other inter-regional sectoral cooperation mechanisms include the RFB Secretariats' Network (RSN), whose aim is to provide a platform for the RFB Secretariats to share knowledge and good practice, and to harmonize their approaches; and the FAO Coordinating Working Party on Fisheries Statistics (CWP), which seeks to streamline statistical activities among the RFBs.

21. The above examples give an idea of the rich variety of experiences, progress and challenges that were shared at the meeting. In doing so, the meeting underlined the usefulness of sharing good practice and knowledge through the SOI Global Dialogue.

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

A. Enhancing the application of the ecosystem approach/ecosystem-based management (e.g., understanding ecosystem structure and function, strategic planning, stakeholder involvement, impact assessments, risk assessments), through cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional/sub-regional scale

1. Participants noted the following general points with regard to enhancing the application of the ecosystem approach/ ecosystem-based management:

   - A success factor in applying the ecosystem approach/ecosystem-based management is identifying, articulating and understanding the specific goals for all of the interested players.
   - Ecosystem based management also involves socio-economic factors. Different sectors have different understandings of what ecosystem-based approaches means, which need to be understood and consolidated.
   - A broader focus on ecosystem-based management and common goals could support cross-sectoral coordination.

2. Participants noted the following general points with regard to enhancing the application of the ecosystem approach/ ecosystem-based management:

   - Potential overlaps of cross-cutting issues (e.g., impacts of climate change). Further regional-level studies are needed to provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of the respective mandates and capacities of regional organizations.
   - Filling potential gaps in mandates can be difficult when there is a lack of prior practice of doing so, as well as a lack of experience in some regional organizations in conducting performance assessment.
   - Legal mandates can be difficult to adapt/change. In this regard, medium-term strategies, voluntary mechanisms and policies and sharing of data and information can be a useful way to integrate the ecosystem approach.
   - It can be unclear how to communicate measures/relevant data or scientific findings to other users, and how to encourage other users to reciprocate.
   - RFMOs that have a limited mandate that does not presently require cross-sectoral communication can report to global bodies, but may require an additional mechanism to facilitate bottom-up and top-down communication.
   - Intellectual property rights over data, data confidentiality restrictions (in the case of some RFMO-held data) and access to data.
   - Potential lack of political will and lack of understanding among public and civil servants.
   - Limited scientific expertise within organizations, especially with regards to ecosystem-related impacts of an activity.

3. Participants noted the following with regard to the mandates/expertise/experience/capacities that regional seas

   Regional Seas Organizations:

   - Mandates of regional seas organizations often aim to balance conservation and sustainable development, and there is a need to identify the interactions that exist between different parts of the ecosystems.
   - Many regional seas organizations traditionally have specific areas of focus (e.g., pollution management, biodiversity conservation, etc.), although there has been an evolution and movement to a broader focus on conservation, monitoring, protection and development for the benefit of people.
   - In many cases, there may not be a change in the text of a regional seas convention regarding the ecosystem approach, even though such an approach may have been incorporated through subsequent COP decisions and strategic action plans. However, the lack of non-binding measures on the ecosystem approach can hinder implementation.
   - There are often gaps in the capacities of regional seas organizations to apply the ecosystem approach.

- The work of large marine ecosystem (LME) projects on transboundary diagnostic assessments can provide a basis for the assessment of the state of the environment reports at the regional level.

Regional fishery bodies (RFBs/RFMOs):

- Usually mandated to ensure sustainable development of fisheries.
- Obligations under the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), which includes the ecosystem approach in relation to obligations of State Parties, although some members States may not be signatories to UNFSA.
- Many RFBs/RFMOs include specific language in their convention text regarding the ecosystem approach, as some have specifically updated their convention to include such issues.
- Lack of scientific information to identify interactions with non-target species, habitats and other parts of the ecosystems remains a challenge for some RFBs/RFMOs.
- There often exists significant enforcement capacity within RFBs.
- In some instances, there are no reporting mechanisms in place to report on how member States are implementing measures (i.e., such as those to reduce by-catch of seabirds) or what corrective actions are taken in instances of non-compliance.
- RFBs/RFMOs regularly undertake performance reviews and capacity building programmes.

4. Participants noted the following ways that the application of the ecosystem approach is, or can be, improved by cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination:

   - Assessing ecosystem limits, in particular with regard to cumulative impacts.
   - Increased access to and sharing of data, as well as harmonized reporting, data compatibility and analysis.
   - Improved monitoring and reporting from an ecosystem perspective, and linking to economic issues. For example, the state of marine environment report in the Caribbean includes a focus on economies that depend on the environment, which broadens and integrates reporting and improves relevance to other ministries. In the Pacific, the regional organizations focus on an integrated ocean management approach, which has filtered down to national ocean policy development.
   - More consistent recognition of gender-based issues (including health).
   - Smaller States can benefit from regional scientific assessment and reporting, as they may lack capacity to fully report on ecosystem-based management on their own.
   - Large marine ecosystem projects can help with implementation and expanding/integrating geographic coverage.

5. Participants identified some potential means by which cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination can be supported and embedded into the operations of regional bodies:

   Legal

   - Incorporation of these mandates in convention texts, or other clear direction for engagement provided by the State Parties.
   - Resolutions and decisions by global bodies (e.g., UNGA, UNEP, CBD).
   - RFMO performance reviews, under the guidance of the review conference of the UNFSA.
   - Some regional seas organizations are developing guidelines for self-evaluation of effectiveness. Some regional seas organizations have set indicators for performance in the context of national reporting.
   - Many RFMOs have processes to ensure that their members implement and comply with obligations arising from their conventions.

   Policy

   - Ecosystem-based strategies, such as large marine ecosystem strategic action plans, with strategies focused on

ecosystem-based management.

- Overarching formal coordination to address multiple impacts, as well as joint groups across regional organizations (e.g., HELCOM/ICES/OSPAR joint working group on birds).
- Regional organizations require mechanisms to assist and motivate national bodies to translate policy into practice and follow up on implementation. There is a need for capacity development, and then use of the capacity as an opportunity for motivation of member States' political will.
- There are multiple policies across each region aiming to embed ecosystem-based approaches, yet the challenge is in implementation.

Science

- Joint science and management groups to develop indicators, provided that parameters of the ecosystem approach are agreed upon.
- Joint data collection among regional organizations.
- Mechanisms, partnerships and/or institutions to link science bodies and regional organizations.
- Participants noted some examples of national data sharing and availability at regional level. For example, in SPC, there is a data repository for coastal fisheries, which has helped to overcome some of the challenges of access to data and data management.
- Capacities to cross check and validate data and scientific outputs vary across regions.
- Communicating and presenting scientific information in a digestible way. Some potential approaches include ecosystem summary sheets, one-pagers for policy makers and dedicated information sections of regional bodies.

6. Participants also highlighted some examples of regional-scale collaboration on indicators, including the following:
   - In the Baltic region, the development of indicators is linked to pressures from human activities, which are specific enough to show progress in order to motivate implementation and follow-up. These are supported by national evaluations on implementation status. It is important to create consistency across evaluations in order to identify what has changed.
   - In the Pacific region, there are report cards using a regional set of indicators to harmonize and streamline the reporting process. They focus on measuring progress towards implementing regional fisheries policies/commitments and measuring change over time.

B. Strengthening the effectiveness of area-based management tools (e.g., marine spatial planning, marine protected areas, particularly sensitive sea areas (PSSAs), vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs)), through cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional/sub-regional scale

7. Participants noted the following general points with regard to the application of area-based management tools (e.g., marine spatial planning, marine protected areas, PSSAs, VMEs), through cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional/sub-regional scale:
   - There are differences between the establishment and implementation of area-based management tools at the national and regional levels.
   - Organizations other than regional seas organizations and regional fishery bodies may have more capacity and mandates to develop and apply area-based management tools.
   - Most marine spatial planning is done by the countries at the national level but there are some good regional examples in progress (e.g. SPRFMO).
   - There exists variability among regional organizations regarding the degree of incorporation of the ecosystem approach, and variability in whether measures are legally binding.

- Some regional organizations (e.g., CPPS) have a mandate to harmonize measures across national boundaries, which provides a useful tool in this regard.
- The effective application of area-based management tools requires regional cooperation and parallel and complementary measures by organizations with global mandates (e.g., International Maritime Organizations (IMO) and International Seabed Authority (ISA)), and a global consensus on the use of area-based management tools. Discontinuities in geographic coverage among regional organizations require flexible arrangements rather than strict adherence to respective geographic mandates.
- Other social and economic regional cooperation platforms exist and should be acknowledged and utilized.
- The lack of maritime delineations in some regions represents a significant problem for cross-sectoral collaboration in the application of area-based management tools.

8. Participants noted the following with regard to the mandates/expertise/experience/capacities that RSOs and RFBs currently possess to apply area-based management tools through cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional/sub-regional scale:

   Regional seas organizations

   - Some RSOs are still developing area-based management tools and protocols whilst others have well established institutions to monitor and support their implementation. Many RFMOs also implement area-based management measures, so harmonising their monitoring and implementation will improve their effectiveness and reduce management costs. Likewise, as many RFBs do have the legal capacity to do so, alignment of objectives and criteria for area-based management tools to reflect broad biodiversity and ecosystem objectives can provide significant value.
   - RSOs provide a recognized platform for coordination, monitoring and enforcement of their Protocols and Action plans and have a substantive advisory role for their member States, with good knowledge and understanding of the issues and priorities in the region.
   - Regional seas organizations facilitate regular communications between different stakeholders in the region and extend far beyond political reaches, and are enablers for stakeholders mobilization in the region
   - There can be some variability in capacity amongst regional seas organizations as well as variable in availability and relationship with expert groups (e.g., ICES, PICES).
   - Capacity for collaboration can be limited by the resources of regional organizations/bodies.

   Regional fishery bodies

   - Some RFMOs have strong legal and regulatory mandates (guided by their Convention) which can provide a basis for the implementation of area-based management tools for fisheries management purposes and reporting on these efforts.
   - There remain RFBs whose work is more focused on target species management, which may limit the capacity for cross-sectoral area-based management.

9. Participants noted the following general points with regard to the application of area-based management tools (e.g., marine spatial planning, marine protected areas, PSSAs, VMEs), through cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional/sub-regional scale:

   - Cross-sectoral dialogues in the context of integrated oceans policies (including regarding MSP) have taken place in different areas (e.g., Canada, Australia, South Africa, EU) and have been reasonably successful.
   - Some cross-sectoral dialogue was conducted to develop indicators initially based at the national level for use in transboundary and inter-zonal issues.
   - In ABNJ, there may be potential for conflicting objectives with regard to the application of area-based management tools in the deep seabed between claims for deep-sea mining and measures taken by RFBs to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems, unless there is scientific support for area-based management for the species under their competence.

10. Participants identified some potential means by which cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination can be supported and embedded into the operations of regional bodies with regard to area-based management tools:

- Regional seas organizations could be represented at the commissions of regional fishery bodies so that they can actively play an advisory role as has been done through OSPAR and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC).
- Regional organizations should consider and potentially address the lack of geographical coverage of some regional organizations in ABNJ, including with regard to ABNJ 'pockets'.
- Establishing regional and global database with regard to the range of area-based management tools at the regional and global levels.
- Capacity building for participants from several different sectors to support the use of harmonized tools.
- Scientific collaboration across agencies and sectors.
- Participation of member States in the meetings and processes of various regional organizations.
- Support for the work of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.
- Mechanism for integration across sectors in ABNJ.
- Better standardization of data collection and including scientific organizations and civil society in cross-sectoral collaboration (e.g., PICES has multiple levels of cooperation, namely a joint expert group with ICES, coordination on special projects related, and sending PICES representatives to meetings of other bodies).
- Personal relationships are critical to developing collaboration between organizations, although this may be undermined by staff turnover.
- Integrated assessments must be supported by requests to the respective regional bodies that are appropriately framed for broad-based integrated advice.

11. Participants discussed means to report to global processes on regional-scale efforts for area-based management (e.g., Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, SDG 14.5), and noted the following:

- Harmonization of regional reporting requirements and national reporting requirements can decrease reporting burden.
- Generally, there is more robust data collection within the fisheries sector than in the environmental/biodiversity sector, however, fisheries data collection is often limited to target fish stocks, and often does not cover non-target species or ecosystem level indicators.
- Reporting is primarily done at the national level. However, countries have different capacities for reporting, and can be supported by regional-scale assessment and reporting through RSOs.
- There is a need for individual member States to improve internal communication and cooperation between agencies to facilitate reporting against SDGs and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.
- There is a need for better cross-sectoral communication among bodies with different mandates (e.g., through MoUs, exchanging observers, etc.) – and informally on the margins of meetings. This may be further supported by a more formal institutional architecture for such approaches.
- The use of global database and other available aggregated data can support reporting on several processes.
- To alleviate the reporting burden on countries, regions could look at simplified ways to collect data that can be used for reporting purposes relating to various global goals and targets.

C. Preventing, reducing and mitigating the impacts of pollution, including marine debris, on marine biodiversity and fisheries resources through cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional/sub-regional scale

12. Participants noted the following general points with regard to preventing, reducing and mitigating the impacts of pollution, including marine debris, on marine biodiversity and fisheries resources through cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional/sub-regional scale:
    - Pollution is one of a number of stressors, and its impacts are often exacerbated by other stressors such as climate change and acidification.
    - There is a challenge in translating information about future scenarios into management measures.
    - At the policy level, there are ways of linking activities between land and sea. However, this often lacks consistency and balance.
    - There is a need, and opportunities, for inter-regional cooperation, rather than just a region-specific focus.
    - Regional organizations can play a key role in raising the profile of pollution as an important transboundary global issue.
    - Depending on the issue, regional organizations can play a supporting role in adopting legally binding measures at the national level.
    - Focus on marine debris should not take away focus from other types of pollution, such as eutrophication, radioactive materials, heavy metals, organic pollutants, mercury and underwater noise.
    - There is a need for harmonization of national approaches to the assessment of pollution, including agreement on baseline levels.
    - Pollution is a main driver at the regional level. Ultimately the activities and policies are national. However, at the regional level it is possible to create incentives for countries to take action by raising regional ambition.
13. Participants identified the following priorities from the fisheries and/or biodiversity perspectives that can be delivered by regional bodies dealing with pollution:
    - With regard to RFBs, these include gear marking, retrieval of lost gear, reporting of lost gear, construction of fishing gear from biodegradable materials instead of plastics and possible rules on prevention of litter and pollution from fishing vessels. These are, however, limited to fishing vessels, which are primarily the responsibility of flag States.
    - RSOs often have various mandates related to pollution from a habitat/biodiversity perspective, as well as impacts, coral reefs, food security and trade.
    - As much pollution is land-based, RSOs are well-placed to address. They can receive requests to identify sources of pollution.
    - RSOs can be involved in the elaboration of baseline thresholds and thresholds for contamination.
    - There is a need for further clarity and understanding regarding what information and actions RFBs require from other sectors/organizations with regard to pollution.
    - There may be requests for coordination with freshwater-focused conventions, as well cooperation and/or coordination with the IMO with regards to ballast-water management.
14. Participants discussed the specific mandates, expertise, experience and capacities that RSOs and RFBs currently possess to prevent, reduce and mitigate the impacts of pollution, and noted the following:
    - Although RFMOs have enforcement capacity, their mandate to address the problem of pollution/marine litter is limited to their focus on fisheries and fishing vessels (e.g., discarded fishing gear).
    - Conversely, many RSOs have specific legal protocols and action plans (e.g., marine litter) in place to address the problem and are active in raising the awareness, although some lack enforcement capacity. They also often publish data and studies, identify causes of the problem, initiate prevention plans, and coordinate remedial measures, among other relevant activities.
    - Mandates of RFBs to address pollution can stem from ecosystem-based management and can be interpreted widely. For example, the IOTC and IATTC are exploring options to reduce marine debris, including the use of biodegradable materials for fish aggregating devices and mitigation measures to reduce consumption of marine sea turtles. In this regard, they can work with RSOs on this issue, as the need arises.

- RSOs often coordinate development and implementation of regional action plans for marine litter.
- Some scientific organizations (e.g., PICES) have committees and working groups on marine pollution (e.g., Radioactive material, harmful algal blooms, jellyfish blooms as a result of pollution, hardening of the shoreline, and overfishing, microplastics and nanoparticles is in the works).
- Inclusion of agricultural issues in the work of regional organizations. For example, in the Baltic Sea, there are legally binding annexes to the Helsinki Convention addressing pollution from land-based sources, including agriculture and on harmful substances. The Cartagena Convention (Caribbean) and other RSOs have protocols on land-based sources of pollution.
- Large marine ecosystem projects and their focus on gathering ecological information can provide a useful means to integrate issues related to marine pollution into the ecosystem approach

15. Participants discussed the ways in which preventing, reducing and mitigating the impacts of pollution are, or can be, improved by cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination and noted the following:
    - Facilitating exchange of data and other scientific information between RSOs and RFBs.
    - Cross-sectional collaboration is necessary to leverage resources and attract needed investment. Enhanced cooperation will allow resources to be applied where pollution can be reduced.
    - The biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) process may help in the mid-term to coordinate all relevant bodies, including global bodies such as the IMO and ISA, and other regional bodies.
    - Contingency plans for oil spills can be developed among regional organizations and the IMO but are usually co-ordinated by the RSO in respective region.
    - Provide an impetus and role for discussions under the CBD to connect with other forums and sectors (i.e. land-based sectors).
    - Improving coastal fisheries and water quality through restoration of habitats, including mangroves, improving water quality, as illustrated by an example of an initiative under the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project (CCLME), river basin plans, and ICZM programmes can also address land based sources (LBS) of pollution.
    - Regional platforms are needed to bring in multiple sectors to identify sources and address sources of marine pollution.
    - Marine spatial planning may provide a process for integrating sectors to address pollution.
    - Regional cooperation can focus on engaging coastal cities to act as champions on this issue and promote investment in waste water treatment.
16. Participants identified ways in which different regional mechanisms support up-stream actions to prevent, reduce and mitigate the impacts of pollution, and some examples:
    - Harmonisation of policies, standards, regulations at the regional level will enable effective leveraging of resources, given that pollution is a global problem (e.g., mobilizing resources to enable RSOs to effectively monitor and report on all forms of marine pollution).
    - Participants identified some positive examples of strategies and initiatives supporting up-stream actions:
        - 'Source to Sea' and 'Ridge to Reef' initiatives from around the world, and the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management, which often include several agencies and ministries, between and within countries;
        - Restoration in the Baltic area of migratory species (e.g. salmon and sea trout) that spawn upstream and then migrate to the sea; and
        - Under the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project, a plan for addressing marine pollution is being developed, which will feed into a broader regional plan identifying the transboundary nature of the issue.

D. Strengthening monitoring and data/information sharing in support of scientific assessment of the status and trends of marine biodiversity and fisheries resources through cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional/sub-regional scale

17. The participants noted that the following general points with regard to strengthening monitoring and data/information sharing in support of scientific assessment of the status and trends of marine biodiversity and fisheries resources through cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional/sub-regional scale:Large marine ecosystem projects and their focus on gathering ecological information can provide a useful means to integrate issues related to marine pollution into the ecosystem approach

    - RSOs and RFBs are not the only organizations with mandates for scientific and monitoring data, as other regional environmental groups, non-governmental organizations, programs, national level data collection are also important players.
    - There is often limited capacity at the national level to collect data (e.g., for artisanal and semi industrial data) which further impacts RSOs and RFBs who rely upon this data in their work. Certain LME programs (e.g., the CLME+ project) have significantly helped to build capacities at a country level to collect data and conduct fundamental research. UNEP is also assisting at the national level (e.g., supporting member States to participate in an expert working group on marine litter).
    - Broader consideration of ecosystem impacts and implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, together with more explicit consideration of climate change-related impacts, could play an important role in increasing shared interests and activities.
    - Users, the scientific community and UN agencies can inform the type of data that should be collected. Data collection and sharing must be underpinned by quality control and the relevant analysis. But variable capacity determine what is achievable. Broader definitions of user requirements to reflect the need for biodiversity parameters, coupled with targeted assistance for reporting, could be helpful.

18. Participants noted the following with regard to the specific mandates, expertise, experience and capacities that RSOs and RFBs currently possess to effectively conduct scientific assessment and monitoring at the regional scale:

    Regional seas organizations

    - RSOs have the capacity to collect certain types of data and are mandated to report on their Action Plans, although regular monitoring and research work is done by member States.
    - Many do not have a research mandate, but regional activity centers and UNEP may commission research or other assistance as part of a response to particular circumstances or needs to gather data from existing sources or new data, and report their findings to the governing bodies.
    - Regional activity centres may initiate working groups to provide advice.

    Regional fishery bodies/RFMOs

    - RFMOs have both scientific and regulatory mandates. They have relevant expertise to effectively conduct scientific assessment. Although the focus of scientific assessment may often be on target stocks. Most commissions have in place monitoring and evaluation frameworks. In general, those RFMOs that have the robust monitoring and scientific data through continuous data collection, which they collect them for the needs of organization, such as annual auditing or long term management of the fisheries sector, should be encouraged to share their data with non-fisheries sectors/scientists to enable a more complete understanding of bycatch, vulnerable species and habitats, and wider ecosystem characteristics.
    - Addressing broader ecosystem-based approaches in RFBs may incentivize cooperation with RSOs which have greater capacity to consider wider ecosystem concerns (e.g., impacts on food webs from pollution, climate change).
    - RFBs in developing country regions can be challenged by lack of financial and other capacities and require external funds from donors to conduct such studies.

19. Participants discussed the ways in which monitoring and data/information sharing in support of scientific assessment of the status and trends of marine biodiversity and fisheries resources are, or can be, improved by cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination:

    - Collaboration with organizations other than RSOs and RFBs, such as indigenous communities, can help to address capacity/knowledge gaps.
    - Focusing more on integrated biodiversity assessments across sectors and agencies to improve access to scientific monitoring and assessment data.
    - Coordination between RSOs and RFBs should promote inter-disciplinary research work, where scientists from the biodiversity and fisheries sectors work more closely together, for example in the development of new surveys, monitoring protocols including establishment of baselines, joint projects (e.g., indicator development, production and dissemination of regional assessment reports).
    - Fishing vessels can be used to collect environmental data, which is currently being done to a certain extent, although it is not always standardized.
    - There is a need for improved harmonization and standardization of data collection across RSOs, RFBs, LME projects, and other organizations and initiatives.

20. Participants identified a number of ways in which regional organizations/bodies can contribute to the World Ocean Assessment and to measuring progress in the implementation as well as the impacts of action at the various levels against global targets and goals (i.e., SDGs and Aichi Biodiversity Targets):

    - Representatives from regional organizations should be a part of the World Ocean Assessment process, which can also help to ensure small island developing States and developing countries with limited capacity are not underrepresented in the process.
    - Regional organizations can play a key role in facilitating and simplifying global reporting, and supporting countries with their reporting efforts. Some felt that the role of regional organizations should be limited to supporting rather than creating another layer of reporting.
    - RSOs and RFBs can help to raise the bar of the global indicators and produce additional or more refined indicators at the regional level.
    - There is a need to look at how digitization and electronic reporting systems can support scientific assessment and reporting.
    - There is a need for more regional portals which accessible by countries.
    - Regular meetings of regional organizations can establish a series of regionally-appropriate indicators.
    - Regional soft law agreements can progress work which might otherwise have been difficult under a hard law or more formal and binding mechanism, and can support advancement on integrated regional issues also being addressed under more formal mechanisms.

ROADMAPS TO ENHANCE CROSS-SECTORAL COOPERATION, SYNERGIES FOR EFFECTIVE DELIVERY, AND INTER-REGIONAL SHARING

A. Possible ways and means to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional scale, including regional dialogue/partnership initiatives

AFRICA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

1. Common vision

- Regional cooperation towards a productive and resilient ocean for the well-being of all.

2. Major milestones

- Identification of existing relevant bodies, and their competencies, mandates and gaps (i.e., RSOs & RFBs; collaboration with LMEs; support from CBD, FAO, UNEP, UNESCO-IOC).
- Establishment of a regional/sub-regional framework for collaboration (i.e., RSOs & RFBs; collaboration with LMEs; support by CBD, FAO, UNEP, UNESCO-IOC).
    - Opportunities to be explored for SOI or other mechanisms as potential frameworks for collaboration
- Agreement on a strategy for communication and ongoing cooperation (i.e. shared responsibility) – details to be determined within the future regional framework.
- Development of shared scenarios and targets – responsibility to be determined within a future regional framework.
- Expanding involvement of broader bodies, including regional economic communities (RECs).
- Monitoring & evaluation of cooperation, and reviewing and adapting strategies.

3. Thematic issues and common interests (i.e., areas where the work RSOs and RFBs can be complementary)

- Critical habitats (healthy fish stocks and ecosystems)
- Pollution
- Migratory species
- Shared/transboundary ecosystems and resources
- Artisanal fisheries
- Interactions with other types of fishing
- Consideration/implementation of FAO guidelines on artisanal fisheries
- Regional cooperation for discussing/coordinating work toward various international agendas
- Strategy for maximising benefits of current interest in oceans/region
- Blue wealth creation
- Equitable distribution of ocean resources/benefits
- Ocean literacy

4. Key actors

- Actors for thematic issues vary from those for general cooperation.
- There is a need to identify and understand dynamics between different actors – both within industries/stocks and between sectors – for a win-win scenario across sectors.
- **Thematic issues**
    - Each thematic issue has its established network of institutions, which has already been identified. However, some of the issues lack a leading institution that can bring together different organizations and stakeholders.

- **General actors for cooperation**
    - UN Economic Commissions; RECs; sub-regional bodies of FAO; Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Arrangement; Indian Ocean Commission; UN/DOALOS.
        - These actors provide a direct link to States
    - Their roles include harmonising policy, coordinating donors and input, and supporting capacity building.
- **Civil Society**
    - The distinction between international and local NGOs is noted:
        - International NGOs can raise awareness regionally and internationally
            - E.g., International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wildlife Fun (WWF), Birdlife, the Nature Conservancy (TNC), etc.
            - Local NGOs play key roles at the national level in advocacy, strengthening civil society, improving transparency, and raising the profile of issues and ongoing efforts.
    - Their roles include filling in data gaps, improving knowledge, strengthening civil society, improving transparency, and raising the profile of issues and ongoing efforts. Local NGOs play key roles at the national level in advocacy, developing political will, among others.
- **Scientific Community**
- **Private Sector**
    - "Impact Investors"
    - Actors in sectors of interest (e.g., shipping for developing blue economy)
- **Donors**
    - Regional donors, including development banks.
- **International actors**
    - International actors must consider regional situations and be coordinated, and ensure that funds are being allocated where they are needed, addressing regionally-identified thematic areas.

5. Possible collaborative activities

- **Science**
    - Coordinate and centralize sources of scientific information
        - E.g., coordinating involvement in regional monitoring efforts, such as the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS).E.g., International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wildlife Fun (WWF), Birdlife, the Nature Conservancy (TNC), etc.
    - Develop frameworks to support science and regional science-to-policy platform, aligning regional science policies with national realities, practices and needs.
- **Political will**
    - Build political will through cooperation via secretariats, advocacy by coordinating at the regional level and sharing national experiences and making political commitments on thematic issues.
- **On-ground implementation**
    - Implement concrete projects beyond creating new policies, strategies, and roadmaps:
        - Pilot projects targeted to specific areas;
        - Cross-cutting projects for tools to support overall strategy and cooperation;

- Projects to support science and technology transfer;
- Projects on marine spatial planning
- Projects to promote well-developed tools that are currently not implemented (e.g., Habitat mapping).

- **Sharing experiences and lessons learned**
  - Facilitate exchange of information within the region and between regions on pressing issues, including tools for fighting IUU and identification of critical habitats.

6. Possible modalities

- **Ongoing projects/programs**
  - It is recommended to collaborate with existing projects/programs, where possible.
  - Webinars and online meetings are useful for mid-term review/sharing, and SOI could facilitate such interim meetings and exchanges of experience.
- **Existing networks**
  - Existing networks can be extended and strengthened, which will help ensure stakeholder participation in initiatives for enhanced cross-sectoral collaboration.
- **Portals/platforms**
  - Portals and platforms can be created and strengthened to bring together information from different regions.
- **Regional dialogue**
  - An overall framework to provide the means for ongoing dialogue can be established.
  - Periodic meetings are needed to bring actors together to facilitate the dialogue and ensure effective communication:
    1. Dialogues organized on specific thematic issues;
    2. Regional meetings between Secretariats to bring together RSOs/RFBs (e.g., a "mini-SOI dialogue"); meetings among Secretariats, States, a broader group of actors for coordination, where there is a mandate.
- **Capacity Building**
  - Rather than a general capacity building project, all projects and their activities should have capacity building components.

7. Short-term priority actions (3 years)

- Fully establish the overall framework for a regional dialogue, facilitated by the SOI process.
- Identify possible sources of financing as well as existing activities that can contribute without additional funding.
- Organize meetings of RSO and RFB Secretariats prior to the next meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue.
- Identify capacity needs for each thematic area.
- Promote knowledge improvement, science & technology platform.
- Identify data gaps and translate existing data into useful and practical knowledge.

8. Overarching/general issues

- Gender balance and equity.
- Regional cooperation and institutions' support for national efforts to meet SDGs.

SOUTH AND CENTRAL PACIFIC

1. **Common vision**
    - Draw from existing regional frameworks, such as framework for a Pacific Oceanscape (FPO), targeting Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs) and SDG 14, which provides a global imperative for governments
    - Similar vision and goals for the Eastern Pacific
    - Vision: SDG 14 & Aichi Targets
    - Mechanisms: a) improve collaboration across the Pacific – gap between what is happening in the East compared to the West; b) range of forums within the region working towards common interests for coastal states, including tuna forums; c) discussions on whether there is a common vision, more likely to be related to fisheries resources and ecosystems interactions
2. **Thematic issues and common interests**
    - Climate change
    - Marine pollution
    - Bycatch (fisheries and non-fisheries)
    - Reduction of fish stocks
    - Ocean acidification
    - Marine transport (e.g., emissions, noise, traffic)
    - Connectivity between exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and ABNJ
    - Seabed mining:
        - Regional 'Environmental Management Plans' (EMP) – closely related to exploration area (e.g. Northeast / Northwest Pacific; OPOC engagement in the issue)
        - A few Pacific Islands, Countries and Territories (PICTs) have begun exploratory agreements; potential conflict issues may arise with fisheries (e.g. area access, pollution)
        - Development of seabed authority area of regime is both an area of concern from an environmental impact perspective, as well as an opportunity for oceans policy (e.g. BBNJ negotiations; seabed authority – workshops/support on dealing with conflicting views and areas of common interest (e.g. area close to RMI)
3. **Key actors**
    - **RSOs and RFBs**
        - WCPFC, SPRFMO, IATTC, CCSBT, CCAMLR, ACAP, ISA, SPREP, SPC, FFA, PIFS/OPOC, CPPS, GOOS regional alliances, USP, SPC
        - A discussion is needed for regional scientific organizations, such as ICES and PICES, to put forward broad voluntary commitments of marine science organizations.
    - **Civil society, international organizations and NGOs**
        - Birdlife International, WWF, IUCN, TNC, Conservation International, Pew, Greenpeace, Oceana, etc.
    - **Countries and territories**
        - PICTs, including overseas territories of France, United States, UK
        - Distant water fishing nations, Oceania and Latin America

- **Distinctions within different parts of the Pacific**
    - For the common vision on the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) to extend further to the Eastern Pacific, it would require engagement with other actors.
    - It is difficult to define the boundaries of these within the Pacific Ocean.
- **Funding**
    - Funding streams vary across entities, but the focus of funding concepts should be on transformational change.
- **Learning and sharing experiences**
    - Despite the fact that SPRFMO is one of the newer organizations, it has one of the most holistic memberships (including many of the actors identified above) and could be used as a vehicle to foster East-West Pacific relationships.

4. Major milestones

- 2030 – Agenda for Sustainable Development (particularly SDG14)
- 2021-2031 – UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development
- 2020 (TBD) – Resumption of the Review Conference on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement
- 2020 – Conclusion of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; Second World Ocean Assessment; Intergovernmental Conference to finalize the BBNJ process; review of provisions on the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep sea fish stocks by the UN General Assembly; and the second UN Ocean Conference.
    - 2020 will be a significant year that brings together multiple milestones.

5. Possible collaborative activities (2018-2021)

Regional collaboration on science:

- Capacity development:
    - E.g. IOC capacity development workshops play a role in identifying how IOC and UNESCO can support science and regional training centres. It is a complementary approach since IOC does not include fisheries.
- Collaboration among scientists:
    - A discussion is needed for regional scientific organizations, such as ICES and PICES, to put forward broad voluntary commitments of marine science organizations.
    - Collaboration opportunities:
        - Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCOSS) in July; SPREP regional science conference; SPRFMO Scientific Committee
            - There is value in linking the three together

Thematic concerns - integrated approach:

- Pacific-wide concerns – extent to which there is collaboration for an overarching body of work.
- The region covers a broad area, which makes it challenging to address issues.
- Enhancing cross-sectoral research and engaging people from different sectors / organizations
- Opportunity for pan-Pacific collaboration with PCCOS could be explored.

Building on regional experiences and momentum:

- WCPFC: strong cooperation within Pacific coastal states in the WCPO region

- Eastern Pacific IATTC: shared interests and shared stocks with WCPO region; open lines of communication between IATTC and WCPFC; MoUs and data sharing; collaborative scientific investigations; and coordinated and compatible management
    - For example, Pan-Pacific assessment of Pacific Bigeye Tuna to understand stock structure; Bluefin has been the subject of cooperative management with relevant IATTC Members invited to participate in meetings of WCPFC NC; ABNJ project envisaged pan-Pacific assessment of Whale Sharks; joint meeting of the commissions.
- Challenge: confidentiality of datasets requiring permissions on a project by project basis. No smooth pan-Pacific data-sharing arrangements in place
- Opportunity to apply lessons-learned from RFBs to RSOs.
    - For example, resolutions to address other sectors' key issues to bring attention; lack of internal synergies and communications between organizations; shared membership; creating opportunities to bring organizations together.
        - For example, representatives from the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies attend each other's governing council meetings thanks to the shared membership;
        - For example, the heads of CROP agencies meet 3-4 times per year: 2017 common theme was Blue Pacific and articulated a common vision. The challenge is to implement the Blue Pacific concept. Activities are already being carried out by (e.g. SPC, PCCOS, SPREP) on BBNJ and identification of key areas for biodiversity, among others, between RFBs and RSOs among PICTs.
- SPRFMO's mandate and its activities overlap with WCPFC, IATTC, SPC, SPREP, CPPS and FFA.
    - Joint projects have been conducted with CPPS and compliance related links are being developed in collaboration with FFA.
    - Increased engagement with CROP agencies and relevant PICTs is likely to be beneficial.
- There has been a tangible way identified to address issues related to bycatch.
    - SPREP work in 2017 to mainstream biodiversity bringing in the fisheries and tourism sectors.

Undertaking joint projects:

- An ambitious next step forward could be implementing joint projects, including Pan-Pacific assessments.
- Opportunities for Pan-Pacific collaboration:
    - Genetic techniques developed over the last 5 years provide a means to identify the actual structure of the stocks, if evidence is increasingly available, along with tagging studies
    - On food webs and flows
    - On climate change and its impacts, particularly on fish stocks
    - Scientific collaboration may be easier. However, co-management would be more challenging, which could potentially hinder progress within RFMOs. Complementary measures are necessary
- Regional conference on the Pacific Ocean with back-to-back events on science and implementation.
    - Purpose: to assist in delivering Aichi Biodiversity Targets and SDG 14 across the region.
    - Initiate discussions and promote through SPC.
    - Timeline of 3-5 year:
        - Ground work from now until 2020 to organize the conference within the next 2-3 years
        - Conference in 2021 to kick off the Decade for Ocean Science could mark the start of the Pacific region's contribution to the Decade. Alternatively, the regional conference could coincide with the second UN Ocean Conference

- It is necessary to start promoting the concept to increase stakeholder interest, and to encourage people in advance to work towards it.
- Lead the preparation in time to build on evidence.
- Develop the concept for the Framework for the Pacific Oceanscape (FPO) by taking existing structures to catalyse and taking the lead, as Fiji did with the Ocean Conference, which could be seen as part of FPO implementation.
- Articulate a concept in order to obtain funding; clarify the opportunities to increase stakeholder engagement; measure the progress and identify the next step needed to further collaborate.
- The need for scientific data has been repeatedly highlighted in the region to help countries make informed decision. In addition to the lack of data, the challenge is that even if there is data, it is not in a form that is useful.
- Extensive actors exist in the region; however, opportunities need to be identified to enable these actors to come together for a conference on ocean science (in a 2-5 year horizon). This should include identifying regional data gaps and priorities, and needs for capacity development and technology transfer.
- Improve the use of current evidence – policy tools and approaches, including:
    - CBD discussions on mechanisms to deliver on targets; looking at policy tools and mechanisms to implement for areas of common interest; workshops on implementing decisions and targets, particularly on implementation gaps, and science and policy interface.
- Back-to-back events and separate discussions could be organized to capture different areas of knowledge and understanding externalities/other drivers.
- While it is important to improve data availability and accessibility, support to successfully implement existing mechanism should be emphasized. Adequate use of evidence and creating an enabling environment to yield outcomes, building on the available evidence, could be promoted.

6. Modalities to involve actors:

- Opportunity with SPC, SPREP, CCPS and other agencies to initiate a dialogue:
    - SPC has clear opportunities but needs to effectively articulate a narrative.
- Opportunity to leverage PCCOS (SPC) could be explored as partnership development, as well as an online knowledge portal and pilot research project on Methylmercury (cross-sectoral research approach), have begun with a short-term timeframe (2018).
- WCPFC and FFA are key players.
- Engage both RSOs and RFBs as cooperation between the agencies is important. Providing a convincing narrative is important.
    - SPREP already has an MOU with CCPS, and this link could be further strengthened by enhancing communication with the organizations.
- Creating a good narrative to promote the concept could help building political commitments and support.
- There was a meeting at the UN Ocean Conference on funding for science, which identified the need to further engage the business community, develop a business case for SDG14, in order to clarify opportunities for investment (whether private or public sector). More efforts to increase the investment are necessary.
- Collect ideas and explore opportunities and partnerships to identify potential funding sources.
- The UN Ocean Conference was a good example of a strong case being made over a long period of time. The Pacific was resourced to organise and be engaged to articulate views, which raised the standards for other regions. Such outcomes could be part of the narrative to promote the concept.

- The proposition endeavours to use the available scientific evidence, in order to ensure the outcomes on sustainable use of marine resources in the Pacific are concrete.

7. Pulling together existing knowledge and identifying information gaps

- Integrate existing knowledge:
  - Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) programme of work, including on loggerhead turtle species; cross-Pacific programme; dugongs; list of projects under CMS (e.g. marine mammals, megafauna).
  - It is necessary to collect more information on threatened and migratory species.
- The SPC data portal is an opportunity for other RFMOs to feed in and contribute data and vice versa.
- WCPFC Bycatch Management Information System
- Addressing substantial data gaps (e.g. seabird interaction on longline vessels, standardisation of how data is collected)
- E.g. SPREP and FFA collaboration – looking at placement metrological-related observation systems on fishing boats to gather climate information.
  - This could be extended to the RFMOs:
    - E.g. Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) is valuable in this context as it uses a variety of platforms to collect information on a standardised framework – oceanographers have been doing it for decades. It is timely to engage industries for more support, then to calibrate, but this is not easy.
    - E.g. Tuna observers collecting isotope information present many opportunities, but it is hard to bring the information together.
- Potential further threats include: new uses of marine resources (e.g., ocean energy, mariculture), which may be more relevant at national (coastal state) level.

8. Summary

- Opportunities to collaborate and realities within the Pacific region were identified. There is existing cooperation within fisheries organization, particularly at the operational level. Opportunities are identified at the broader level of integrating oceans, climate and other relevant concerns into potential development of an enriched view of interactions between oceans and fisheries within the Pacific. Critical activities identified to achieve this in the short-term include development of a platform/mechanism for collaboration of ocean scientists, increase in the availability of integrated ocean information, and organization of a Pacific Ocean Science and Implementation Conference by 2021.

WIDER CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA

1. **Common vision/long-term outcome:**

- Long-term (20-years) CLME+/Wider Caribbean vision: "a healthy marine environment that supports the well-being and the livelihoods of the people of the region", which was jointly elaborated by regional intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) including RSOs and RFBs, and endorsed by countries of the region, on the basis for the 10-year CLME+ Strategic Action Programme (SAP):

"healthy marine ecosystems that are adequately valued and protected through robust, integrative and inclusive governance arrangements at regional, sub-regional, national and local levels, which in turn effectively enable adaptive management that maximizes, in a sustainable manner, the provision of goods and services in support of enhanced livelihoods and human well-being".

- Gulf of Mexico (GOM) LME vision, from the Gulf of Mexico LME SAP: *"a healthy and resilient Gulf of Mexico where coastal communities enjoy high standards of quality of life and the regions socio-economic activities are competitive and sustainable. Likewise, the region's natural resources, biophysical structure and landscape quality provide environmental services that halt threats and reduce vulnerability of the population and infrastructure"*
- Cartagena Convention vision is very similar to CLME+ vision and covers GOMLME, CLME and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (NBSLME).
- No such vision has been developed yet for the Pacific area (PACA) LME. However, opportunities may arise if GEF support for LME-based PACA project can be materialized in short-term. A dialogue between Antigua Convention and OSPESCA is recommended, in this context.

2. **Key actors to be involved and their roles at the regional scale**

GEF/LME Community/UNDP/CLME+PCU:

1. Source of finance GEF;
2. Mainstreaming ecosystem based approach;
3. Integrators / (interim) coordinators.

Governmental

- CLME+/Wider Caribbean: 8 IGOs, including RSOs and RFBs, constituting the CLME+ SAP Interim Coordination Mechanism (ICM), within which 3 RFBs constituting Interim Fisheries Coordination Mechanism.
- ICCAT; Sargasso Sea Commission.
- Pacific: Antigua Convention (UNEP RSOs in the Pacific area), OSPESCA, IATTC.
- Countries in the region.

Interactive governance: Establishment of Global CLME+ Alliance/Partnership: NGO's, CSO's, Private Sector, Academia, Donor and Development Aid Community (e.g., TNC, IUCN, ACS-CSC, CI, WWF, etc.)

- There is a need to engage shipping (IMO), tourism, and other sectors.

3. **Thematic issues of common interest that need to be addressed**

- Thematic areas:
  - Habitats and biodiversity, unsustainable fisheries, and pollution
  - Cross-cutting issues, such as climate and societal change
- Root causes:
  - Weak governance, financial capacity, technical capacity, awareness, access to data and information

4. **Major milestones that can enable regional bodies to reach vision/long-term outcome**

Targets (milestones) set under CLME+ and GOMLME SAP and global commitments (Aichi Biodiversity Targets, SDGs)

- Consolidate the multi-level, nested governance framework (governmental component)
- Strengthen its constituents (the IGOs, ministries); fill in gaps (RFMO; PPCM); review and revise CC/CEP strategy and associated Sustainable Fisheries Partnerships (SFPs); and enable inter-sectoral coordination both at the regional and national levels, including national cross-sectoral dialogue for establishment and operationalization of NICs.
- Integrative governance: Global CLME+ Alliance/Partnership, with CLME+ Hub as information & exchange platform.
- Create capacity for implementing ecosystem-based management (EBM) and the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) by defining operational objectives and performance indicators.
- Create capacity for data collection on fisheries, biodiversity, habitats and pollution.
- Institutionalize a State of Marine Environment and associated Economies (SOMEE) reporting mechanism (science-policy interface).
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP).

5. Possible collaborative activities to address priority thematic issues of common interest

- Valuation of ecosystem goods and services, including identification of coastal and marine capital and its contribution in terms of disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the context of climate change.
- Build scientific capacity to help implement EBM/EAF across levels in the region.
- Leverage additional financial resources, expand projects required to fully implement CLME+ SAP, prepare project proposal(s) for Pacific Central American Coastal Large Marine Ecosystem (PACA LME).
- Establish a regional forum, coordination, and exchange mechanism to foster and implement ICZM and MSP across the region.
- Develop State of Marine Environment and associated Economies (SOMEE) reporting
- Identify potential roles and contributions of non-governmental actors in monitoring and assessment processes.
- Progressive expansion and consolidation of the Global CLME+ Alliance/Partnership;
- Achieve enhanced understanding of ecological connectivity.
- Establish a network of MPAs, MMA, and areas for sustainable fisheries across the region.

6. Possible modalities for involving various players in the region

- Regular meetings of the individual constituents of the Regional Framework for Integrated Ocean Governance (RGF).
- Interim Fisheries Coordination Mechanism.
- CLME+ SAP ICM.
- CLME+ Alliance/Partnership and its 1st Forum meeting + CLME+ Hub.
- CBD/LME: LEARN/UNDP GEF CLME+ supported regional workshop, donor forum.

7. Short-term (3yrs) priority actions that can be undertaken to provide enabling conditions for enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation to reach long-term milestones identified above

- Consultation process for the transformation of WECAFC into an RFMO.
- Consultation process for the consolidation of the CLME+ RGF.
    - Permanent Policy Coordination Mechanism; Sustainable Financing Mechanism for the CLME+ RGF.
- Organization of a national-level cross-sectoral dialogue.

- Progressive expansion and consolidation of the Global CLME+ Alliance & Partnership
    - First and second CLME+ partnership forum meeting, donor forum
- Institutionalization of the CLME+ SOMEE reporting mechanism:
    - Development of the 1st CLME+ SOMEE report
- Preparation of project proposals:
    - PACA LME; "CLME++", and others to fill gaps in CLME+ SAP implementation.
- Expand information on distribution and ecological connectivity of Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol listed species in the region (LME/EEZ-ABNJ linkages).
- Joint identification and evaluation of marine species for listing under SPAW Protocol (from the CRFM-CEP MoU).
- Preparation of fisheries management and recovery plans (from CRFM-CEP MoU).
- Consolidate knowledge on connectivity in the context of the establishment of network of MPAs, MMAs, and areas for sustainable fisheries.
- Develop research strategies to support EBM/EAF in the Wider Caribbean/CLME+ region
- Consider possible joint meeting of UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme- Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (CEP-STACS) and WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG).

EAST ASIA AND NORTH PACIFIC

1. Vision for regional cooperation

- Boundaries at the sub-regional level.
- Vision is defined by the global agenda (Aichi Biodiversity Targets and SDGs) and individual strategies/plans of the regional institutions.
- Healthy ecosystems and their sustainable use.
- National capacities exist, but there is no discourse on a regional definition and values of conservation and use of marine and coastal biodiversity. Conflicts between conservation and use should be addressed.

2. Regional thematic issues

- Habitat fragmentation and degradation.
- Conservation of transboundary species (birds and mammals) and related habitats.
- Harmful algal blooms and invasive species.
- Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture: ecosystem-based approach to fisheries.
- Setting ecosystem baseline.
- Climate change, ocean acidification and coral reef restoration.
- Marine litter, including microplastics.
- Eutrophication.
- Biodiversity, including change in species composition and indicator species.

3. Regional opportunities for action-based cooperation

- Alignment and coordination in producing ecosystem status reports.
    - Focus is to make the reports policy-relevant, use the language understandable for policy/decision makers, and address issue of data aggregation.
- Data and information sharing should focus on a specific issue.
    - For example, specific information needs for fisheries.
- Dialogue on the development of nationally and regionally-agreed targets and indicators.
- Specific cooperative projects on issues, such as transboundary species, ecosystem-based information for fisheries management, and harmonization of microplastics.
- Second cycle of a regular process to collect regional inputs.
- Initial dialogues on issues related to BBNJ.
- Joint resource mobilization.

4. Regional milestones and practical steps until 2020-2023

- By 2020, each regional institution has a marine biodiversity related entity and dedicated experts (aspirational).
- By 2020, regionally-coordinated inputs are provided to the World Ocean Assessment-2 and cooperation on ecosystem and biodiversity assessment reports is enhanced.
- By 2023, regionally-agreed targets and indicators are aligned with Aichi Biodiversity Targets and SDGs for some organizations.
- Increase the number of bilateral and multilateral partnerships and projects in the region.
- Organize at least one regional dialogue under SOI on region-specific issues, with biodiversity-related institutions other than RSOs and RFBs.

B. Enhancing inter-regional sharing of experiences through the SOI Global Dialogue, including creating synergies among relevant initiatives/processes

1. It was highlighted that the SOI Global Dialogue has facilitated cross-sectoral engagement among many regional organizations and bodies. Efforts to promote cooperation between RSOs, RFBs/RFMOs, Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) projects and regional science organizations are ongoing, with many new examples emerging since the first meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue. An important task is to link available resources, such as capacity development and institutional strengthening, with those organizations and regions most in need of support. Although there seem to be overlapping approaches between existing and emerging initiatives, it was noted that continuous dialogue and communication among initiatives, including through the SOI Global Dialogue, can ensure synergies and complementarity for effective delivery of long-term outcomes.

2. In discussing potential inter-sessional activities, focus was given on the role of regional organizations and bodies on supporting national reporting of progress in achieving global goals and targets, including:National capacities exist, but there is no discourse on a regional definition and values of conservation and use of marine and coastal biodiversity. Conflicts between conservation and use should be addressed.

   Contributions of regional organizations and bodies to achieving global goals and targets

   - The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) Regional Alliances develop data that can be used to provide scientific input to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
   - The Sargasso Sea Commission supports its signatory States by providing scientific input.
   - The Caribbean Environment Programme is revising its Strategy. In doing so, they are aligning the Strategy with the SDGs. They are also developing the national reporting format for the Convention.
   - A 20x20 target for MPAs has been set under the Caribbean Challenge Initiative for a subset of countries from the Wider Caribbean.
   - The recently initiated work on the development and institutionalization of an integrated regional-level reporting mechanism on "the State of the Marine Environment and associated Economies (CLME+ SOMEE) also provides an opportunity to track progress, and inform targeted resource mobilization strategies at the regional level.
   - The Secretariat of the Pacific Community and Pacific Island Forum works in the region to reduce reporting burdens for 22 Pacific Island Countries.
   - The Pacific headline indicators, a smaller set of indicators, will inform the SDG reporting process.
   - The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) provide data to individual countries to assist their reporting.
   - Various regional organizations and bodies either completed or are in the process of aligning their performance indicators and targets with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and SDGs. Specific examples include the Northwest Pacific Action Plan Medium Term Strategy 2018-2023 and the Yellow Sea LME SAP.
   - The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP) have developed mid-term strategies which are aligned with SDG 14. UNEP-MAP and GFCM are implementing common activities in support of relevant SDGs.
   - HELCOM facilitates the reporting by offering a regional component for possible use by its Contracting Parties, through joint monitoring activities within the Baltic Sea and joint planning of research cruises between the countries.
   - The Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention assisted the countries in developing a standardised reporting format and methodology for Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 9.
   - The Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organization is supporting the implementation of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) since 1995. CCRF is a voluntary instrument and a synthesis of UNCLOS, UNFSA and CBD. A regional agreement for adopting CCRF was achieved in 2000. Following this, the

organization assisted its members in policy harmonization. capacity-building and moving towards an ecosystem based approach for fisheries management to meet SDG14.

- NOWPAP and COBSEA have developed mid-term strategies to advance the ecosystems approach and bridge the land sea interface. The Sargasso Sea Commission supports its signatory States by providing scientific input.

How regional organizations and bodies support their member States in achieving global goals and targets

- Direct linkage of regional organizations to national-level implementation is important in helping to achieve global goals.
- A focus has been placed mainly on SDGs, and there should be improved efforts to link how the ongoing activities link to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The main task will be synthesizing the information for the region in order to make it more relevant and helpful to policy-making.
- The aim of the regional organizations is for all transboundary issues to be identified together and addressed together.
- The regional organizations could identify gaps, including SDG indicators at Tiers I to III, which sometimes vary regionally from those identified by the UN inter-agency statistical group at the global level.
- There is a limited scope for "formal" and intensive engagement in the development and reporting of the SDG indicators. Regional organizations could contribute to the global process.
- Many environment-related SDG indicators are still being developed.
- Regional organizations can support national-level reporting in specific areas of transboundary concern or in areas with lacking national capacity. Ecosystem status reports, if aligned with SDGs, could be sources of useful information for national reporting.
- The second World Ocean Assessment could be an important avenue for including regional ecosystem information.
- At present, the fisheries-related reporting from RFBs to FAO, which then submits information to reports of the UN Secretary-General is a good example of an effective reporting chain. For RSOs and LMEs, global demand for such information is absent, other than for regional needs, as the Secretary-General's reports on oceans and the law of the sea are not yet aligned with SDGs-related reporting format. However, this work is in progress for the Regional Seas Programmes.
- Existing ecosystem indicators or the ones to be developed by regional organizations will almost certainly be more detailed than SDG indicators, and this information could be used by countries for more granular SDG reporting.
- It is good to capitalize on existing reporting processes. There is a scope for them to be modified to be more useful, within respective mandates.
- Regional organizations (e.g., through LME projects) can mobilize resources from the GEF, for instance, to help countries implement activities conducive to the achievement of global goals and targets.

Potential added value of the regional organizations functioning as platforms to monitor and review the achievements of global goals and targets

- Common views on the status of the marine environment require harmonized data across the region. RFMO's added value is mostly for areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular for monitoring.
- Ecosystem perspective on progress and status can be provided.
- Regional organizations can bring together all relevant players and address transboundary issues which require regional perspectives, such as the conservation of migratory species.
- Help harmonize reporting by countries.
- Provide aggregated data summaries that might have more value.
- It is easier to address compliance with Port State measures and IUU from a regional perspective.

Possible inter-sessional activities to enhance inter-regional sharing of experiences

- Workshops on harmonized regional-level integrated reporting can be convened, articulating clear linkages and synergies with global processes.
- Development of a template or blank matrix for reporting for regional organizations to use.
- Some fishery bodies can meet bilaterally on specific issues and attend each other's meetings as observers.
- Regional organizations could provide leadership and scientific and managerial input to improve SDG indicators after this current reporting period.
    - For example, capturing greater detail in fisheries performance.
- Priority areas for reinforced engagement and contribution by regional organizations can be identified (e.g., habitat mapping).
- There would need to be a leading institution, such as FAO or UNEP, which could decide on how best to facilitate the exchange of information and sharing lessons. The EU already has coordination modalities between RSOs and RFBs, as well as a common ocean policy. The UN system could lead on the harmonization of approaches, and examples from the EU could be used to help share lessons on the process and overcoming challenges, such as data paucity and capacity issues.
- Regional networks of RFBs can have an inter-sessional meeting on this issue and annual regional seas meetings can discuss this issue.
- Champion States can be engaged to drive discussions among regional organizations.