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Korea

SOI
GLOBAL
DIALOGUE

REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE SOI GLOBAL DIALOGUE WITH REGIONAL SEAS ORGANIZATIONS AND REGIONAL FISHERY BODIES

*Catalyzing Regional Leadership in Implementing
Major Global Frameworks for the Ocean:
The Global Biodiversity Framework
and the BBNJ Agreement*



Convention on
Biological Diversity



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Ministry of Oceans
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Table of Contents

A. CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF THE MEETING.....	3
B. SETTING THE SCENE.....	10
C. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN SINCE THE THIRD MEETING OF THE SOI GLOBAL DIALOGUE	13
D. KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK: ROLES OF, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION	20
E. AGREEMENT UNDER UNCLOS ON THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION	33
F. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE GLOBAL DIALOGUE	47

A. CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF THE MEETING

Background and Approach of the Meeting

1. The Fourth Meeting of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies was convened in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 11 to 14 June 2024. Financial support was provided by the Government of the Republic of Korea (through the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries), the Government of France (through the French Biodiversity Agency) and the Principality of Monaco. The meeting was convened by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with the organizational support of the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea (MABIK).
2. Participants comprised representatives of regional seas organizations (RSOs), regional fishery bodies (RFBs), other global and regional organizations and initiatives, national governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.
3. The meeting focused on:
 - a. Sharing experiences on the respective work of RSOs and RFBs and on their cross-sectoral cooperation in support of achieving global goals and targets, as well as identifying means and approaches to enhance cooperation between these bodies within and across regions;
 - b. Sharing experiences on the support that global and regional organizations are providing in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and identifying means and approaches for these organizations to support their respective member States with regard to monitoring and reporting the progress in the implementation of the Framework; and
 - c. Identifying key challenges, opportunities and priority actions/for global and regional organizations to support the entry into force and future implementation of the Agreement 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 (BBNJ Agreement).

Developments in Global Policy Frameworks for the Ocean

4. Updates were provided on developments in selected intergovernmental processes, in particular regarding the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement, developments in relevant processes under the UN General Assembly and in relation to the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, the FAO Committee on Fisheries and work under FAO to support the efforts of Regional Fishery Bodies, the UN Environment Assembly and work under UNEP to support the efforts of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, the process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, and the development of regulations for the exploitation of mineral resources in the international seabed Area and regional environmental management planning under the International Seabed Authority.

Progress and Developments in Regional Cross-Sectoral Cooperation

5. Participants reviewed and discussed ongoing progress made in enhancing regional cross-sectoral cooperation. A presentation was provided on the results of an online survey conducted with RSOs and RFBs focused on the status of regional efforts for coordinating and collaborating on their work activities with respect to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the BBNJ Agreement, which showed, among other findings, that:

- a. The majority of responding organizations (79 per cent) reported conducting regular communication/dialogue with other regional or global organizations operating within the same region;
 - b. Half of the responding organizations reported engaging in regular joint or collaborative efforts with other regional or global organizations with respect to their region's marine resources and environment;
 - c. Eighty-three per cent of responding organizations noted that the Regional Roadmaps¹ for their region have been partially implemented;
 - d. Fifty-nine per cent of responding organizations reported that they have aligned their work or strategies with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and 50 per cent of them reported that they support their Parties/Member States in the implementation of the Framework or its monitoring framework; and
 - e. Fifty-nine per cent of responding organizations reported having discussions in their respective processes regarding the implications of the BBNJ Agreement for their work and 76 per cent of respondents noted that the area-based management tools part of the Agreement was the most relevant for the work of their organizations.
6. Updates were also provided by representatives of RSOs, RFBs and other regional mechanisms, through regionally coordinated presentations, addressing developments and progress in cross-sectoral regional cooperation among the following organizations:
- a. Nairobi Convention, Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA), Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC), and Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA);
 - b. Black Sea Commission, North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR), International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC), and Sargasso Sea Commission (SSC);
 - c. Cartagena Convention Secretariat/Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP), Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Caribbean & North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) and the Organization for Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPESCA-SICA);
 - d. Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS), Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES);
 - e. Benguela Current Commission (BCC), Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation Among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT-ATLAFCO), Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO), and the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC);
 - f. Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-governmental Organization (BOBP), Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), and Partnerships for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA).
7. These updates brought forth various insights on a range of issues related to cross-sectoral regional cooperation, including the following:

¹ Developed during the 3rd meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue in 2022

- a. The scale and prevalence of cross-sectoral regional cooperation has increased significantly since the beginning of the SOI Global Dialogue in 2016, facilitated by increased awareness among stakeholders of the value of such collaboration, continuous trust-building efforts through information and experience sharing, including through the SOI Global Dialogue as well as regional capacity building workshops;
- b. The SOI Global Dialogue has proven to be an important platform and means to illustrate the value of regional cooperation and facilitate regional organizations to identify opportunities for enhancing regional cooperation within their respective regions;
- c. Enhanced global-level visibility and increased recognition by respective member States of regional bodies on the value of cross-sectoral cooperation within the region and with other regions;
- d. A wide range of approaches for enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation have been applied and proven to be useful, spanning from improved informal and formal communication among regional organizations in a given region to establishing formal cooperation mechanisms and joint projects and capacity building initiatives;
- e. Developments in various global intergovernmental processes are contributing to the impetus and necessity for increasing the scale and scope of cross-sectoral regional cooperation on issues of common interest, including the need to further engage regional economic cooperation organizations and other relevant regional bodies.

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

- 8. Under this topic, presentations were delivered on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including the work by Parties in translating the Framework to the national level actions through updating or developing national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), setting national targets, and developing national monitoring systems in line with the monitoring framework for the Global Biodiversity Framework. Presentations were also provided on key thematic elements and considerations for implementation of the Framework of relevance for cross-institutional cooperation, as well as on selected examples of how regional organizations are taking up, and/or how their work is aligned with, the Framework. Summaries of these are provided in section D of this meeting report. Key points that emerged from these presentations include the following:
 - a. It is essential to consider all relevant targets of the Framework in a comprehensive and holistic manner taking into account the interconnectedness among targets for implementation. In particular, it was noted that a disproportionate focus often placed on Target 3 (the so-called “30x30” target) of the Framework may risk drawing significant attention away from many other Targets that are critically important for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity;
 - b. There is a significant amount of work ongoing in global and regional processes as well as tools and resources available to support the implementation of the Framework that may not be fully accounted for in national-level planning for implementation of the Framework;
 - c. Many regional organizations have received strong mandates, including through decisions of their respective COPs, to support their Parties/Member States efforts to implement the Framework;
 - d. Some regional processes are orienting their strategic planning and direction setting to focus on priorities that align with key goals and targets of the Framework, with some regions having initiated these efforts prior to the final adoption of the Framework in order to facilitate national implementation;
 - e. There is a need for enhanced capacity building and training, in particular for developing countries, in order to support the implementation of the framework;
 - f. The Framework is also providing further impetus for enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation in some regions, with individual regional processes focusing on key targets of heightened relevance for their respective areas of work and supporting countries in addressing actions

in response to priorities articulated by different global processes and commitments (e.g., CMS, UNFCCC, CITES);

- g. There is a need for robust engagement of multiple sectors, including economic commissions, transportation, tourism and the private sector, and SOI can play an important role in this, including at the regional and national levels; and
 - h. Some regional processes are orienting their training activities, resource mobilization and project development to address multiple priorities of the Framework in an inter-linked manner.
9. Breakout groups (organized by region) then discussed monitoring, reporting and assessment of the progress in the implementation of the Framework. These discussions brought forth numerous issues and insights, which are provided in more detail in section D (4.4) of the meeting report, including the following:
- a. Means and ways to operationalize the mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review are to be considered by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD at its sixteenth meeting, in particular with regards to national reporting as well as how information from global and regional processes can inform the global review of the progress in the implementation of the Framework;
 - b. The proposed mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review of the Framework require systematic, data-driven and robust monitoring and assessments, which may be challenging in many developing countries;
 - c. Noting that the headline indicators, as adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, at its fifteenth meeting, may not cover all important aspects of how the progress in the implementation of the Framework could be monitored and assessed in marine and coastal areas, a critical need for regional bodies to support their respective member States, as needed, with regard to the use of components and complimentary indicators or any other relevant national indicators, was highlighted;
 - d. Although global and regional organizations play an important role, monitoring, reporting and assessment is Party-driven, both in terms of the central role of national reporting as well as in decisions regarding what other types of information may be used from other sources in the global review of progress towards the achievement of the Framework;
 - e. Many types of information with respect to marine and coastal ecosystems may be more appropriately compiled and interpreted at the regional level rather than at the national level, especially with respect to species and ecosystems that span across multiple jurisdictions, including migratory species;
 - f. Some types of regional-level monitoring and assessments could be disaggregated nationally and used in national reporting by CBD Parties;
 - g. Regional organizations can help harmonize standardized methodologies for monitoring across countries, ensuring consistency in how data is collected, analyzed, and reported;
 - h. Global and regional organizations can support assessment on various elements of the monitoring framework, including regarding biodiversity, pressures and impacts, governance and policy, socio-economic and cultural elements;
 - i. In reporting for the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, FAO collates data simultaneously on national and regional implementation that may be useful for monitoring the progress in the implementation of the Framework;
 - j. Various global and regional processes have their own reporting and assessment processes, which may or may not align in terms of periodicity and the capability of these types of data to be harmonized;
 - k. Regional organizations often offer technical support to countries in utilizing existing monitoring and reporting framework and can also facilitate peer learning and the sharing

- I. Efforts could be made to identify opportunities to utilize information generated through blue economy efforts and national climate change planning, in view of the importance that many countries place on these issues.

- ## Agreement 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 (BBNJ Agreement)

- 7

for EIAs for planned activities in areas within national jurisdiction that may have impacts in areas beyond national jurisdiction;

15. With respect to ABMTs, including MPAs, and EIAs, the session highlighted inter alia, that:

- a. A significant body of work has been carried out on ABMTs, including MPAs, and EIAs under global and regional processes, and there is significant experience in some regions and sectors that can inform the application of the relevant provisions of the Agreement;
- b. When developing proposals for ABMTs, including MPAs, Parties are required to collaborate and consult with relevant stakeholders, including instruments, frameworks and bodies (IFBs), and proposals are to include, where applicable, information on ABMTs implemented under relevant IFBs;
- c. Collaboration and engagement of global and regional organizations in this process can add significant value, especially regarding information that these organizations can provide on human activities and their impacts;
- d. In taking decisions on ABMTs, including MPAs, the BBNJ COP will have to respect the competences of, and not undermine, relevant IFBs. The COP may take decisions on measures compatible with those adopted by relevant IFBs, in cooperation and coordination with them. Where proposed measures are within the competences of other IFBs, the COP may make recommendations to Parties and to IFBs to promote the adoption of relevant measures through such IFBs, in accordance with their respective mandates;
- e. As IFBs will continue to have the role of formulating and adopting ABMTs under their competence after the BBNJ enters into force, they can strengthen their work regarding ABMTs for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in ABNJ without needing to postpone such work until the Agreement's entry into force;
- f. The BBNJ COP may also consider and decide to develop a mechanism regarding ABMTs that have been adopted by relevant IFBs;
- g. The BBNJ COP will make arrangements for regular consultations to enhance cooperation and coordination with and among relevant IFBs;
- h. Parties shall promote, as appropriate, the adoption of measures within relevant IFBs of which they are members to support implementation of the decisions of the BBNJ COP;
- i. The decision on whether an EIA is required for a planned activity, and whether a planned activity is allowed to proceed following an EIA, will be taken by the Party that has jurisdiction or control over the activity, but the Agreement provides a mechanism to allow other Parties to register their concerns with the Party that authorized the activity and with the Scientific and Technical Body under the Agreement;
- j. No screening or EIA will be required for a planned activity if it is determined that: (a) the potential impacts of the planned activity or category of activity have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of an IFBs; (b) that (i) the assessment already undertaken for the planned activity is equivalent to the one required under the Agreement, and the results of the assessment are taken into account; or (ii) the regulations or standards of the IFB arising from the assessment were designed to prevent, mitigate or manage potential impacts below the threshold for environmental impact assessments under the Agreement, and they have been complied with;
- k. The Agreement provides a framework for cooperation with IFBs on EIAs, which includes that the BBNJ COP will develop mechanisms for the Scientific and Technical Body under the Agreement to cooperate with IFBs on EIAs, including cooperation on the development of standards or guidelines on EIAs;
- l. EIAs are one of the aspects of the Agreement that regional fishery bodies may need to more closely further look into in terms of the implications this will have for them; and
- m. Nothing would preclude the BBNJ COP from deciding on EIA requirements as part of the measures adopted for ABMTs, including MPAs.

16. With respect to MGRs and CB&TMT, the session highlighted, inter alia, that:

- a. With respect to MGRs, the Agreement provides for, among others, (i) sharing of both monetary and non-monetary benefits, (ii) notification requirements on activities with respect to MGRs, (iii) provisions to address access to traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities associated with MGRs in ABNJ and (iv) mechanisms for ensuring the monitoring and transparency of activities with respect to MGRs;
- b. In its work, the Access and Benefit-Sharing Committee established under the Agreement may consult and facilitate the exchange of information with relevant IFBs on activities under its mandate, including benefit-sharing, the use of digital sequence information on marine genetic resources, best practices, tools and methodologies, data governance and lessons learned;
- c. In relation to capacity-building and technology transfer, in providing capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology under the Agreement, Parties will be required to cooperate at all levels and in all forms, including through strengthening cooperation and coordination between relevant IFBs;
- d. The Agreement also foresees that CB&TMT shall build upon and not duplicate existing programmes and be guided by lessons learned, including those from capacity-building and transfer of marine technology activities under relevant IFBs;
- e. CB&TMT are to be based on and be responsive to the needs and priorities of developing States/Parties, and in order to identify such needs and priorities, the Agreement envisages needs assessments, on an individual case-by-case, subregional or regional basis;
- f. There is a role for regional bodies in supporting their respective parties in becoming parties to the Agreement, including through awareness-raising about the content and implications of the Agreement and assistance with needs assessments, as well as in the future implementation of the Agreement;
- g. Support is being provided, including by DOALOS and through the Global Environment Facility, to promote a better understanding of the Agreement and build the capacity of developing States to become party to the Agreement;
- h. The support provided will need to be coordinated with a view to maximizing on opportunities and avoiding duplications. It will also need to be tailored to each region.

17. With respect to “Engagement of relevant bodies in, and cooperation under, the Agreement”, the session and breakout group discussions highlighted, inter alia, that:

- a. There are different ways in which IFBs can and will be engaged under the BBNJ Agreement and in which coordination and cooperation will be provided for including:
 - i. Participation in consultations under the Agreement with respect to ABMTs, including MPAs, and EIAs;
 - ii. Cooperation with the bodies established under the Agreement, including through participation of IFBs in meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies, and input invited from IFBs to the work of the various bodies established under the Agreement;
 - iii. The establishment by the BBNJ COP of appropriate procedures for cooperation and coordination with and among relevant IFBs;
 - iv. The operationalization of the “not undermining” provision in respect of several aspects.
- b. Many regional organizations noted the lack of awareness of their Members/Parties with respect to the BBNJ Agreement, in particular regarding implications for the work of the regional organizations as well as what actions are required at the national level (e.g., possible need for additional legislation, national-level cross-sectoral coordination);
- c. Some regional organizations may need to amend/adjust their work to align with the Agreement;

- d. In certain regions, there already exists knowledge, data and expertise highly relevant to the implementation of the Agreement, while other regions are lacking in capacity;
- e. Regions may benefit from improved regional coordination to better understand the implications of the Agreement for their region and respective processes;
- f. Regional and national-level champions can help to significantly elevate the profile of this topic in regional processes where more attention is needed;
- g. There is a need to maximize available opportunities and enabling activities, including through the development of new projects, convening of workshops and the dissemination of materials about the Agreement in order to improve understanding of the Agreement and its relevance to the work of IFBs and to support implementation of the Agreement;
- h. There is a need to draw on awareness-raising resources and capacity-building support available from DOALOS and through the GEF;
- i. The SOI Global Dialogue provides a valuable opportunity to continue exchanging on the BBNJ Agreement with a view to continuing to raise awareness and sharing experiences and to conduct joint capacity building activities.

B. SETTING THE SCENE

Opening of the Meeting

The Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, Do-hyung Kang, delivered an opening statement, expressing his view that, through the discussion about the roles of each country, the forum provide an opportunity to elevate efforts for the protection of oceans at an international level.

Jihyun Lee (CBD Secretariat) delivered an opening statement on behalf of the Acting Executive Secretary of the CBD Secretariat, David Cooper. Ms. Lee welcomed participants and expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for hosting the event, as well as to other key supporters, including the French Biodiversity Agency, the Government of Monaco, and the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea (MABIK). She emphasized the value of collaboration with UNEP and FAO in advancing SOI objectives, and for this meeting in particular, she noted the close partnership with the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. She highlighted the SOI Global Dialogue as a successful platform enabling regions to find solutions and opportunities for their specific contexts and areas of work. She also stressed the critical timing of the meeting, in view of the adoption of major international frameworks like the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the BBNJ Agreement, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States, and the ongoing efforts on plastic pollution and harmful fisheries subsidies. While these agreements are significant, their impact depends on effective national implementation. Ms. Lee further urged cross-sectoral cooperation and strategic alignment of efforts to support governments in achieving biodiversity goals and targets, reaffirming the SOI Global Dialogue's role in fostering such collaboration. She concluded by encouraging productive discussions and expressed the CBD Secretariat's commitment to working with all participants to turn global commitments into tangible actions.

Piero Mannini (FAO) delivered an opening statement on behalf of the Assistant Director-General and Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Manuel Barange. He began by emphasizing the importance of a regional approach for actions aimed at sustainable development. He noted that FAO has been supporting the regional approach by supporting both the work of individual regional fisheries bodies and their linkages and exchange through the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network. He noted also that the important role of these bodies in the sustainable management of fisheries and fisheries governance has increasingly been highlighted in recent policy fora. In addition, he noted that the FAO Committee on Fisheries encouraged FAO to continue to develop cross-sectoral cooperation between regional fisheries bodies and regional seas conventions and programmes, recognizing also their existing cooperation through the Global Dialogue. Noting the need for improved actions and synergies at global, regional and national

levels, he welcomed the progress made by the international community aimed at ensuring viable and implementable international legally binding instruments related to ocean governance. He emphasized the need for cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of common ocean resources, including through fisheries management and environmental protection, noting the work of the Global Dialogue and the need for strong political will and financial support in this context. He pledged FAO's continued support for these cooperating mechanisms and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for its continued support.

Nancy Soi (UNEP) delivered opening remarks. She thanked the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, for hosting the participants. She noted the meeting was taking place at an opportune time when critical discussions on ocean governance are gaining momentum on a global scale, as evidenced by the recent adoption of the new global Agreement 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 (BBNJ Agreement) and of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and most recently the positive outcomes of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-4) in April of this year, all of which call for enhanced cooperation to ensure a harmonious and unified approach to conservation of marine resources. She noted the work of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme in supporting 18 regional seas conventions and action plans around the world. She noted that the present meeting provides an opportunity to examine the technical capacity of our institutions, the mandate of our frameworks and how we can leverage each other's strengths, partnerships, networks, capacities, tools, guidelines, and other resources to shift the needle towards realizing the objectives, goals and targets set out in our regional and/or global frameworks.

The President of the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea (MABIK), Wan-hyun Choi, delivered opening remarks, emphasizing a need for ever strong ties and solidarity to preserve and conserve our oceans. As the only Korean governmental office specializing in research, exhibition, and education on marine bio-resources, he promised that MABIK will consistently strive to strengthen international partnerships to overcome global challenges.

Meeting Background, Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Meeting Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Joe Appiott (CBD Secretariat) introduced the objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting. Mr. Appiott emphasized the key role of regional organizations in achieving global goals, particularly by translating global commitments into national action, supporting implementation, and reporting on progress and challenges at the global level. He reflected on the outcomes of previous SOI Global Dialogue meetings in 2016, 2018 and 2022, as well as intersessional workshops and informal working groups. He highlighted the main focus of the SOI Global Dialogue in identifying where and how improved cooperation and coordination can help RSOs and RFBs to better fulfill their mandates and support achievement of global, regional and national objectives, focusing on practical, actionable and achievable steps, and learning lessons and tailoring approaches to regions. The thematic areas of focus cover issues of common interest across RFBs and RSOs, including the ecosystem approach and ecosystem-based management, area-based management tools, preventing, reducing and mitigating the impacts of pollution, and monitoring and data sharing. Mr. Appiott also underscored the Regional Roadmaps developed at the third meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue in 2022 as a means to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation. He concluded by providing an overview of the meeting agenda and the key topics to be discussed.

Global Context

Joe Appiott (CBD Secretariat) delivered a presentation on SOI and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Mr. Appiott outlined the SOI vision as well as the key SOI elements, including the SOI regional and national capacity-building workshops, the SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies, and SOI events held on the margins of major international processes. He introduced the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in December 2022, explaining that it is part of a broader package of decisions on: (i) resource mobilization, (ii) capacity-building and development, and technical and scientific cooperation, (iii) monitoring framework

(indicators), and (iv) digital sequence information on genetic resources. He provided an overview of the four goals and the 23 targets of the Framework, emphasizing that while they were crafted to be generic and applicable to all biomes, nearly all are relevant to the ocean. He stressed the importance of addressing the key drivers of biodiversity loss and the need for broader engagement of the ocean community. He also discussed the key considerations in implementing the 2020-2025 SOI Action Plan, including: (i) supporting the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, (ii) linkages with relevant initiatives and programmes, (iii) applying a human-centered approach, (iv) linking SOI activities in a holistic matter, (v) taking a strategic approach to cross-sectoral engagement, and (vi) maintaining a flexible and adaptive approach.

Charlotte Salpin (DOALOS) provided an overview of recent developments in ocean affairs and the law of the sea at the United Nations since the last meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue in 2022. Ms. Salpin highlighted how regional cooperation had recently been featured in: the outcome of the resumed Review Conference on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, held in May 2023; the discussions at the seventeenth meeting of the Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement, held in May 2024 on the topic “Sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change”; the annual resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on “oceans and the law of the sea” and on “sustainable fisheries”; the discussions of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its 23rd meeting, held on the theme “New maritime technologies: challenges and opportunities”; the third cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-Economic Aspects, which was currently developing the third World Ocean Assessment to be completed in 2025; and in the outcome document of the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS. Ms. Salpin recalled that the Agreement 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 (BBNJ Agreement) had been adopted in June 2023 and noted that further details would be provided in the dedicated session during the meeting. She also provided an update on preparations for the third United Nations Ocean Conference, to be co-hosted by Costa Rica and France in 2025.

Piero Mannini (FAO) presented on the FAO's support for Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs). He noted that the regional level is the most appropriate level for establishing a collaborative framework to preserve and protect whole ecosystems efficiently while also providing opportunities for participating States to benefit sustainably from the services they render. He emphasized that global instruments and normative processes must be implemented and translated into actions at the national and regional levels, as appropriate. RFBs continue to evolve in response to calls for sustainability, improved management and governance, and as a result of lessons learned and stronger commitment by their members. Mr. Mannini provided an overview of how FAO supports these processes and developments through its technical work on fisheries and aquaculture, and provided a synopsis of recent developments among RFBs. Mr. Mannini noted that enhanced cooperation and coordination among RFBs have been on the international fisheries governance agenda for many years through UNGA resolutions on sustainable fisheries. Since 2022, the UNGA has been calling on States to strengthen cooperation, communication and coordination of measures among existing RFBs by holding joint consultations. In response to a call from the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) to increase cooperation and ensure common approaches, in 2022, FAO convened two regional consultations with RFBs in the Western Indian Ocean and Central Eastern Atlantic Ocean aimed at enhancing sustainable fisheries governance. He noted that FAO is actively committed to bolstering regional cooperation through the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN), which provides a forum for promoting consultation and regional dialogue, addressing priority issues of common concern and fostering cooperation and exchange of information. Through the RSN, FAO is supporting RFBs on the identification and implementation of other effective area-based conservation methods (OECMs) related to fisheries in their areas of competence and is focusing on the impact of climate change on the multilateral governance of fisheries. Finally, Mr. Mannini briefly outlined the Common Oceans Program: a global partnership funded by the GEF, promoting sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation in ABNJ with a particular focus on tuna and deep-sea fisheries, the Sargasso Sea and cross-sectoral cooperation. Led by FAO, the Program brings together the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNEP, RFMOs, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia.

Nancy Soi (UNEP) presented on the UNEP Regional Seas Programme and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. She recounted the

history of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, which was launched in 1974 and now covers 18 regions around the world: 14 of the programmes were established by or under the auspices of UNEP, while four are independent partner organizations. She explained that the Regional Seas Programme provides a platform for countries sharing a common sea/ocean to cooperate on the management of their shared marine and coastal environment, with the coordination and support of the United Nations Environment Programme or, in the case of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, operated by States/Parties. She explained the mandate of the Regional Seas Programme—to address environmental degradation of shared marine and coastal areas, including through concerted management efforts. She outlined the outcomes of the 23rd global meeting of the Regional Seas Programme in November 2023, the role of the Programme at the sixth session of the UN Environment Assembly and its relevant outcomes, and relevant outcomes of the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution in April 2024.

Jose Dallo (International Seabed Authority) explained that the mandate of ISA, in accordance with UNCLOS, is to organize and control all mineral-resource related activities in the international seabed area (the Area) for the benefit of humankind as a whole. In so doing, ISA is mandated to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment and promote marine scientific research. ISA currently presents a unique example of a global multilateral approach to regulating a global common, which represents 54 per cent of the world's oceans. In addition to the regulations themselves, ISA has been developing and implementing various tools and measures for the protection of the marine environment. These include mandatory environmental baseline studies and data-sharing by contractors, as well as recommendations and drafts standards and guidelines on environmental impact assessments and monitoring. Effective ocean governance in ABNJ requires respecting mandates of competent organizations, as well as leveraging their capacities and expertise, while enhancing coordination and coherence. In the last three decades, ISA has produced knowledge, tools and methodologies, such as the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative, a flagship initiative to advance scientific knowledge and capacity on deep-sea biodiversity to support informed decision-making for the protection and sustainable use of the Area, which can be leveraged in delivering the KMGBF and implementing the 2023 BBNJ Agreement.

C. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN SINCE THE THIRD MEETING OF THE SOI GLOBAL DIALOGUE

Under this agenda item, **Marketa Zackova (CBD Secretariat)** presented the results of a survey on cooperation and coordination among RSOs and RFBs, as well as their participation in key international processes. Ms. Zackova highlighted that 79 per cent of the responding organizations frequently communicate with other organizations in the same region, while 21 per cent do so occasionally. There have been significant joint and collaborative efforts, particularly in monitoring, assessment and reporting, inputs to international processes, research and addressing the impacts of climate change. Challenges reported include a lack of financial and human resources and excessive workload. Regarding key international processes, 38 per cent of the responding organizations have partially aligned their work or strategies with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and 21 per cent have done so mostly or completely. Support is being provided to countries, particularly on targets 3, 5, 9 and 10. Additionally, 59 per cent of the responding organizations have started discussing the implications of the BBNJ Agreement for their work. Regional roadmaps have been partially implemented, but there is an ongoing need for increased financial resources. Ms. Zackova concluded by noting that the full results of the survey are available in a [report](#).

Updates from various regions on cross-sectoral cooperation at the regional scale and inputs to relevant global processes

North and Western Indian Ocean²

On behalf of the North and Western Indian Ocean regional group, **Jared Bosire (Nairobi Convention)** reported on cross-sectoral regional cooperation and inputs to relevant global processes in the Western

² The following regional organizations coordinated on the presentation under this group: Nairobi Convention; PERSGA; RECOFI; ROPME; SWIOFC; WIOMSA

Indian Ocean region, while **Maher Amer (PERSGA)** reported on the activities of PERSGA on the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Mr. Bosire began by informing participants about the decision by the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention in November 2021 to develop, through a participatory process, a Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) for the Western Indian Ocean, which was inspired by and contributing to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) Cairo Declaration of 2015. Mr. Bosire further explained that since May 2022, the ROGS support team has worked with a 24-member multi-stakeholder task force made up of experts from across the Western Indian Ocean region. The task force included representatives of the Parties to the Nairobi Convention, the African Union (AU), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the Indian Ocean Commission, the private sector and civil society actors, as well as selected regional experts. The task force, backed by a support team hosted by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, comprises experts from the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association, the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Collective Leadership Institute and is dedicated to enhancing collective leadership capacity for the participatory development of the ROGS. The support team organized the co-development of the ROGS through a series of participatory technical dialogues and information sessions with the ROGS task force.

The task force has been actively involved in co-creating the strategy, focusing on four clusters: maritime security, blue economy, environment and natural resources, and knowledge management and capacity building. The task force and support team have held a series of technical dialogues and information sessions on a range of topics, including the law of the sea; oil spills; ocean accounts; blue tourism; marine plastics pollution; marine protected areas; water quality; financing the strategy; areas beyond national jurisdiction; ports, shipping and maritime security; knowledge management and capacity building; and fisheries, among others. He concluded by noting that the draft strategy would be presented to the Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention on 22 August 2024 at COP 11 for possible adoption.

Maher Amer (PERSGA) then spoke about the PERSGA's collaboration/coordination with other organizations. Mr. Amer noted that the Red Sea is considered a global biodiversity hotspot, while the Gulf of Aden is considered one of the most productive water bodies in the world, particularly for fisheries. While mangroves, seagrasses and coral reefs are currently experiencing rapid decline on a global scale, those in the Red Sea appear to be in relatively better shape. However, these resources are not immune to the stressors that cause degradation, such as increasing ocean temperature and acidification, habitats loss, overfishing and marine pollution. Mr. Amer explained that PERSGA has two full-size projects funded respectively by the World Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme - Global Environment Facility (UNEP-GEF). The World Bank project, "Sustainable Fishery Development in the Red Sea & Gulf of Aden Project (SFISH) 2022-2026", contains three main components: 1) Upgrade PERSGA capacities, regional database for collaborative assessment of the status of living marine resources; 2) Support regional platforms for coordination of policies, legislations and action plans for responsible fisheries and aquaculture, and 3) Citizen, private sector and development partner engagement in the sustainable fishery through enhanced knowledge management, communication strategies and awareness. The GEF project, "Harnessing Marine Ecosystem Services and Transforming to Sustainable Blue Economy in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (HESBERSGA), 2025-2029", will contain four components as follows: 1) Update PERSGA Strategic Action Program; 2) Harness Ecosystem Services and Resilience; 3) Reform BE Sectors Governance and Building Partnerships for SBE; and 4) Enhance BE Knowledge Management, Visibility & Awareness. Regarding coordination and cooperation with other Regional Seas Conventions, in April 2024 PERSGA and UNEP-MAP signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation on a bilateral basis for the mutual exchange of experience in such areas as biodiversity, marine protected areas, marine spatial planning, integrated marine and coastal area management, fisheries, pollution and climate change.

North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea³

On behalf of this group, **Iryna Makarenko (Black Sea Commission)**, presented on the cross-sectoral regional cooperation among RSOs and RFBs and progress in the North Atlantic, Sargasso Sea, Baltic, Mediterranean and the Black Sea achieved since the last meeting of the Global Dialogue. Ms. Makarenko focused on three key themes, aligned with the outcomes of the previous meeting: OECMs, bycatch and ecosystem-based management (EBM). For OECMs, she reported on several initiatives, including the

³ The following regional organizations coordinated on the presentation under this group: BSC; GFCM; ICES; NEAFC; OSPAR; SSC; SPA/RAC

GFCM and SPA/RAC's OECM guidelines and workshop for 2023, HELCOM's Regional common understanding and decision support tree, ICES's workshop on the long term benefits of NEAFC measures, NAFO's Informal Working Group on OECMs in March 2023, and the OSPAR-NEAFC joint narrative on MPAs and OECMs. She also noted the ongoing high level discussion at the Sargasso Sea Commission. In terms of bycatch, Ms. Makarenko highlighted several projects and initiatives, including:

- GFCM/UNEP-MAP/SPA/RAC's five-year MedBycatch project;
- HELCOM's work on the number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear;
- ICES's Bycatch Roadmap and efforts to understand bycatch in the Mediterranean and Black Sea;
- NAFO's work on Greenland shark bycatch;
- NEAFC's work on understanding bycatch;
- OSPAR's ongoing efforts on deep-sea shark bycatch;
- The creation of a network for harbour porpoise bycatch in the Black Sea, agreed upon in March 2024 between the European Commission, GFCM, ACCOBAMS and the Black Sea Commission;
- Inclusion of bycatch issues in the Sargasso Sea Commission's Socio-economic Diagnostic Analysis (SEDA)

For EBM, Ms. Makarenko noted the following progress:

- GFCM/UNEP-MAP/SPA/RAC's Fisheries and Ecosystem Based Management for the Blue Economy of the Mediterranean;
- HELCOM's efforts to strengthen the ecosystem-based approach (Baltic Sea Action Plan);
- ICES/NEAFC's consideration of biodiversity and ecosystem objectives;
- NAFO's advancement of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM), including Total Catch Index;
- OSPAR's implementation of EBM as part of its Ministerial Strategy;
- BSC's upcoming GEF/UNDP/IOC-UNESCO project to address MPAs and blue economy, as well as a new FAO-GFCM project on fisheries.

Ms. Makarenko presented the following key messages from the group: 1) the BBNJ should act as a driver for closer collaboration and cooperation between relevant bodies and countries operating in the high seas; 2) regional bodies are well placed to act as focal points for that collaboration but there are challenges to overcome; 3) working together through initiatives under the SOI will support the achievement of the GBF targets. She also emphasized the outstanding role of the Global Dialogue and cooperation between Regional Seas Conventions and fisheries commissions towards implementation of the GBF and other relevant commitments.

Wider Caribbean⁴

On behalf of this group, **Alex Girvan (CLME+)**, presented the progress on the collective work being done in the wider Caribbean region (and beyond), and how this work contributed to the regional roadmap. The presentation introduced the Ocean Coordination Mechanism (OCM) for Ocean Governance in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine ecosystem (the wider Caribbean), indicating that the OCM was close to being operationalized. Mr. Girvan introduced the governance of this mechanism and explained that its executive group includes four of the five organizations representing the wider Caribbean at the present meeting. The regional roadmap was presented giving an update on progress using the Google sheet tracking tool, which represents potential best practice for regional coordination. Some selected key achievements included the receipt of funding in support of the regional roadmap through projects such as UNDP/GEF/UNOPS PROCARIBE+ project and the CAF/FAO/GEF/CRFM BE CLME+ project. This funding enables collaboration across geographies in key fisheries of spiny lobster, queen conch and shrimp. It also enables collaboration on marine protected areas (MPAs), marine spatial planning (MSP) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) across the various regional organizations. Mr. Girvan noted that FAO-WECAFC jointly hosted a workshop "Other effective conservation measures based on fisheries-related areas in Latin America and the Caribbean – ECOMOs" reflecting ongoing collaboration on this issue. He further noted that the PROCARIBE+ project will work on other areas of collaboration, including a regional marine data information landscape, and a state of the marine ecosystems and associated economies report that will allow regional bodies to work closely

⁴ The following regional organizations coordinated on the presentation under this group: Cartagena Convention; CLME+; CRFM; OSPESCA; WECAFC; SSC

together on the regional roadmap. Finally, Mr. Girvan outlined the emerging issues on which the regional bodies wanted to collaborate, including sargassum seaweed, sustainable value chain development, bycatch issues and solutions, migratory species and collaboration with adjacent ecosystem areas, including the Sargasso Sea Commission.

Pacific Ocean Basins⁵

On behalf of this group, **Mauricio Pryor Moreno (CPPS)** began the presentation by comparing how the organizations in this region engage in dialogue with other RSOs and RFBs, as all of them do. However, the approaches to this dialogue vary. The most common methods include the use of memoranda of understanding, participation in meetings, joint activities in training events and regular informal communication. He explained that these organizations facilitate data and information sharing but also use other unique approaches. For example, CCSBT focuses on compliance and monitoring, CPPS and NOWPAP address pollution assessments, PICES provides collaboration and advice, and SPREP handles emergency response, reporting and compliance. Mr. Moreno concluded by emphasizing that CPPS is developing the concept of "biozones" as a novel approach to establish protected areas based on environmental interests for State Parties. Furthermore, NOWPAP is actively addressing marine litter and plastic pollution through its diverse agenda. Finally, PICES is leveraging its scientific expertise and experience to offer a platform for capacity development related to the BBNJ Agreement in the North Pacific region.

East Atlantic African region⁶

On behalf of this group, **Ndiaga Gueye (CECAF)** presented an overview of shared experiences and lessons-learned with respect to the regional roadmap for the East Atlantic African region. Mr. Gueye highlighted the importance of regional cooperation for sustainable fisheries management and explained how Atlantic seaboard organizations in Africa adhere to global frameworks like the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. He highlighted key issues (environmental and fisheries) and regional actions and contributions to biodiversity conservation and sustainable management practices, in line with international agreements such as the BBNJ Agreement. Additionally, Mr. Gueye presented practical aspects of collaboration in the region, focusing on proposed solutions and building on examples of successful regional initiatives such as marine protected areas, joint surveillance operations, dangers of plastic pollution and promotion of the BBNJ Agreement. These efforts aim to strengthen ongoing initiatives to combat IUU fishing, promote sustainable practices and protect marine biodiversity across the Atlantic Ocean region. Challenges, such as political and institutional constraints, along with capacity issues in data management, were acknowledged. To overcome these challenges, Atlantic organizations issued a call to action for continued regional cooperation, an integrated governance approach, and enhanced linkages between specialized regional fisheries institutions and environmental governance frameworks; improving capacities and systems for collaboration and collection of best practices and lessons learned, and enhancing capacity building through regular dialogues, the centralization of scientific data and fostering political will.

East, South and Southeast Asia⁷

On behalf of this group, **Mahesh Pradhan (COBSEA)** reported on cross-sectoral regional cooperation, updates with respect to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the BBNJ Agreement, and progress on the regional roadmap in East, South and Southeast Asia. Mr. Pradhan noted that in terms of regional collaboration, BOBP-IGO launched the BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network, organized the FAO Workshop on the role of RFBs in international fisheries governance to mainstream climate change, and organized a regional dialogue of the BOB Stock Assessment Network

⁵ The following regional organizations coordinated on the presentation under this group: CCSBT; CPPS; NOWPAP; PICES; SPC; SPREP

⁶ The following regional organizations coordinated on the presentation under this group: BCC; CECAF; COMHAFAT; FCWC; SEAFO; SRFC

⁷ The following regional organizations coordinated on the presentation under this group: BOBP; COBSEA; PEMSEA; SACEP; SEAFDEC

with practitioners on stock assessment. The key tasks in the upcoming year are to assess the impacts of climate change on selected fish stocks and the Fisheries Management Efficiency (FME) index for the Bay of Bengal. For knowledge management, BOBP formed a Virtual Knowledge Network, which serves as a platform for cross learning. BOBP plans to organize an OECM national capacity building workshop in collaboration with IUCN and a regional workshop on BBNJ in collaboration with the High Seas Alliance in August 2024 with the participation of eight BOB Rim countries. The BOBLME Project, funded by GEF-FAO, helped to implement the cooperation roadmap developed for the region during the third meeting of the Global Dialogue. The activities taken up are under the thematic areas of (i) sustainable fisheries management, (ii) coastal and marine ecosystem management and conservation and (iii) marine pollution. Three national workshops have been completed and the fourth is planned for July 2024.

Mr. Pradhan explained that SACEP is contributing to regional cooperation through the “Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia (PLEASE) Project”, funded by the World Bank. SACEP participated in a panel discussion on “Lost at Sea: Combating Abandoned, Lost, and otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear” organized by the World Bank during INC-3. SACEP developed the “South Asia Roadmap for Sustainable Nitrogen Management” for adoption at the 16th Governing Council Meeting in June 2024 in Thimphu, Bhutan, following the South Asia Nitrogen Hub Annual Forum in October 2023 in Sri Lanka, supported by UNEP and SANH. SACEP developed the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan for the SASP region in partnership with the IMO and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. In addition, SACEP supported the development of the “National Economic Assessment on Biofouling Management in Sri Lanka” and “National Biofouling Management Strategy and Action Plan” as the Lead Partnering Country of the Glo-Fouling Partnerships Project in the South Asian Seas Region. In 2023, SACEP provided technical training on the Development and Analysis of Biofouling Management Plans and Record Books in collaboration with IMO and the Marine Environment Protection Authority of Sri Lanka. Further, SACEP coordinated to obtain emergency response assistance from the Indian Coast Guard under the South Asia Regional Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Plan to address the X-Press Pearl containership incident in Sri Lanka. SACEP’s activities under the PLEASE Project to minimize the impact of Plastic Pollution on Marine Biodiversity is aligned with Target 7, and the Regional Strategy and Action Plan for Managing Biofouling in South Asia addresses Target 6 of the KMGBF.

PEMSEA has actively expanded its collaboration with regional environmental organizations, including CTI, RPOA-IUU, ASEAN Center for Biodiversity, COBSEA and the ASEAN Working Groups for the sustainable conservation of the marine environment in the East Asian seas. Projects such as UNDP/GEF ATSEA-2, UNDP/GEF/ASEAN IRBM, UNDP/GEF ASEAN ENMAPs (Effectively Managing Networks of MPAs in Large Marine Ecosystems in the ASEAN Region), and the RoK MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastic ODA Project, implemented by PEMSEA, will greatly contribute to achieving GBF targets in the region. Additionally, PEMSEA has supported ratification and implementation of the BBNJ Agreement in partnership with High Sea Alliance and has continuously worked on knowledge sharing and capacity building on ICM, marine ecosystem conservation, marine plastic pollution, climate adaptation and blue economy.

SEAFDEC has been working collaboratively with various international and regional organizations such as FAO, ASEAN, CTI-CFF, RPOA-IUU, IUCN, BOBP-IGO, WWF-US to implement regional projects in line with the GBF targets. SEAFDEC also provided capacity development, including in stock assessment, EAFM and SSF, to enhance the capacity of its Member Countries. In addition, SEAFDEC also updated participants on progress in the regional initiatives and projects on which it is working with collaborative partners, focusing on sustainable fisheries, coastal and marine ecosystem management and conservation and marine pollution

Finally, regarding COBSEA, its new Strategic Directions 2023-2027 and the COBSEA Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Framework provide guidance for regional initiatives and cooperation on marine and coastal environments. These are aligned with global targets identified in the SDGs and the GBF. Several initiatives are planned/ongoing, namely: GEF Sustainable Blue Economy with focus on small and medium-sized enterprises; Green Fins with focus on Indonesia; launch of MPA support for coastal and marine ecosystem management and conservation; GEF-8 Integrated Programme on Clean and Healthy Oceans, with focus on nutrients for Thailand as well as plastics and marine litter, namely SEA circular (2018-2024); Marine Litter Prevention through Reduction, Sustainable Design and Recycling of Plastic Packaging (MA-RE-DESIGN) project (2022-2026), and the East Asian Seas Regional Node of the Global Partnership on Plastics and Marine Litter.

Breakout group discussion on means to scale up regional cooperation and coordination

Following the above series of coordinated regional presentations, participants discussed three assigned topics in randomly assigned groups, and the highlights of their discussion were reported by facilitators to the plenary. In response to ***“how has success in regional cooperation and coordination been achieved and how can this be scaled up”***, facilitators reported the following points, *inter alia*:

- In the Caribbean, efforts are underway to establish a regional coordination mechanism;
- In the North Atlantic, joint initiatives are addressing specific topics, with some countries promoting cooperation among regional organizations;
- In West Africa, a regional working group on fisheries meets twice a year to exchange experiences and build capacity, including discussions on marine spatial planning as a framework for collaboration and to establish new MPAs;
- PERSGA has a coordination committee that identifies and addresses specific issues for collective action;
- Funds can be sought jointly by looking at geographic and ecological structures that are important to donors, e.g., through a project-based GEF LME approach, which helps set defined goals and build the experience of collaborating together;
- Organizations that may specialize in different ecosystems or species should exchange information to their mutual advantage, instead of competing for scarce resources, thereby also reducing workloads;
- Cross-sectoral linkages (e.g., pollution, fisheries) can increase funding opportunities;
- Strong leadership from IGOs and multilateral agencies is important, as is regional organizations signing MoUs with development partners and working closely with the member Countries;
- Regional organizations play a key role in developing model harmonized legislation on issues requiring legal adherence that can enable easier adaptation to the national level;
- Encouraging countries to leverage existing institutional mechanisms;
- Mainstreaming effective practices;
- International collective agreements have helped strengthen regional and global cooperation, including, for example, on scientific cooperation;
- Other elements that help achieve the success of regional cooperation include the identification of issues that may affect the region as a whole (e.g., sargassum); international cooperation frameworks; regional development plans that include a wide range of stakeholders to advance good management of the fishing resources; providing spaces for scientific cooperation, with interaction at the political level; development of joint activities between regions rather than carrying out specific activities in each region separately; and encouraging the commitment of the developed countries in each region, with respect to joint actions of cooperation and shared management of resources;
- Success often stems from taking an analytical approach and building on synergies across documents to meetings, mandates and competencies;
- Institutional arrangements (e.g., MoUs, working groups, activity centres, and centres of excellence) are highly effective when hosted by regional organizations;
- Importance of harmonization of methods, formats, tools, goals, financial mechanisms, joint programmes and activities, common language and terminology, and a creative environment based on trust, and the use of impartial platform (e.g., the UN);
- Concrete examples of successful regional collaboration/coordination are essential for demonstrating the value of collaboration and should be shared to inspire further coordination.

In response to ***“what are the key opportunities to scale up regional cooperation and coordination”***, facilitators reported the following points, *inter alia*:

- Common agenda, plans and regulations, particularly those that are set up by international frameworks, which create a momentum that attracts interest;
- Coordination driven by a rotating responsibility through a two-year “chairmanship” by each organization so the burden is shared and also to provide a learning experience through observation in each others’ meetings;

- Finding solutions is often as simple as just getting the right people together to discuss common issues: getting people talking to each other through meetings and events is very important to collaboration;
- Leveraging existing collaborative projects;
- Exploring possible collaborative projects on areas such as OECMs, BBNJ Agreement; plastics treaty; marine spatial planning; blue economy; integrated marine and coastal area management; marine renewables;
- Replicating success from others – cross learning – leverage SOI platform; adapt to cultural situations and scale-up;
- Implementing the portfolio of existing international cooperation frameworks;
- Integrating the commercial element with the element of resource management;
- Promoting the participation of the private sector in resource management;
- Replicating successful experiences, where there is greater cooperation between the private sector, the public sector, government and regional fisheries management organizations;
- Making use of a wide range of cost-efficient technologies;
- Integrated approaches, governance vs. sectoral orientation; driver-specific interests, mandates;
- Capacity (technological and human);
- Utilize different types of financial mechanisms;
- Developed information exchange/communication skills/platforms: effective knowledge management;
- Capitalizing on complementarity of mandates (gaps/overlaps);
- Shared partners/stakeholders at all levels
- Shared centres of excellence, talents, champions and platforms
- Important not to only talk about fisheries, but also the other major pressures impacting the marine environment (marine debris, pollution, climate change);
- Consider strengthening or formalizing the role of RSCs/RFMOs in implementing global instruments;
- Generate more cross-sectoral discussions, like the SOI Global Dialogue;
- NGOs (environmental and industry) could add a helpful dimension to the discussions, by raising issues that Secretariats could not;
- The CBD Secretariat could facilitate cross-sectoral engagement at the national level;

In response to ***“what are the most pressing needs for regional cooperation and coordination in the context of global goals/frameworks”***, facilitators reported the following points, *inter alia*:

- Defining joint activities and concrete tangible outcomes that can be monitored;
- Identifying clear roles for each partner, seeking complementarity;
- Resources to initiate collaboration;
- Data and information to track success and developing standardized methods for tracking success towards global goals/frameworks;
- Cost-effective indicators and data-collection methods;
- Raising awareness of the issues and sensitizing constituents to their obligations under global frameworks such as the GBF and BBNJ; countries may not be aware of implications when signing and hence have difficulty in ratification and/or implementation;
- Clarifying implications of the BBNJ Agreement at the country level;
- Advisory group with all stakeholders/ministries (e.g., BBNJ-fisheries, environment, oil/gas)
- Financial resources to compensate for additional workload; alternative/additional human resources; enhance secretariat staff capacity;
- Enhancing national absorptive/institutional capacity
- Conservation to ensure the sustainability of the resource; move environment on the top of development agenda;
- Diversification of the economy;
- Shorter-term, achievable target;
- Working together in joint fund-raising efforts;

- Cost-effective indicators, and capacity-development to use them, to track success as countries work towards global goals and frameworks;
- Improving communication;
- Collaboration to save resources: Leveraging strengths across organizations to support each others mandate; data-sharing between RFMOs; deep-sea fisheries sharing resources with/training observers/inspectors from coastal countries;
- Fellowships for young scientists;
- Realizing comparative advantage ecosystems and coral reefs influence fisheries and sometimes

In the brief plenary discussion that followed, participants emphasized the need for transformative change and adequate financing, while also underscoring the importance of practical solutions. They acknowledged the significant progress made since the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It was also noted that regional bodies, which respond directly to their Parties and Member States, play a key role in shaping national actions and priorities, and in fostering regional consensus.

D. KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK: ROLES OF, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Overview of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Jihyun Lee (CBD Secretariat) stressed the importance of reading the entire text of the Framework, including for the inspiration it provides. Ms. Lee emphasized that the Framework demands “transformative change” and asked participants to consider what that means. She further emphasized that the Framework is about much more than the 30 by 30 target, which is what seems to be the best-known aspect of it: it is much wider and deeper than this target. If we focus on this best-known aspect of the Framework, we will not achieve its goals. Referring to the Kunming Ministerial Declaration, she noted that it reflects the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and reflects the concern that there is an existential crisis for humanity in terms of our relationship with biodiversity. She asked participants to read it carefully, as it is about the future of our children. Noting the vision of the Framework, to live in harmony with nature by 2050, and the mission for 2030, to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, she noticed that the targets reflect the aspiration of Parties to see the three objectives of the Convention reflected in a balanced manner. She also pointed to the cross-cutting considerations in section C, which recognizes different concepts of nature and whole-of-nature approaches, noting that the Framework reflects the concerns of many different stakeholders. Reviewing the targets most relevant to the ocean, she emphasized that although the words “ocean” and “fishing” do not appear, because all of the targets are relevant.

Translating the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework into national action through NBSAPs

In a pre-recorded video presentation, **Jillian Campbell (CBD Secretariat)** provided an overview of the process for global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Framework. Ms. Campbell began by outlining the major outcomes of COP 15. When the Framework was adopted through decision 15/4, there were a package of other decisions that were seen to have equal standing to the Framework. This included two decisions: decision 15/5 on the mechanism for planning, monitoring and reporting and review and decision 15/6 on the planning, monitoring, review and reporting mechanism. She noted that decision 15/6 requests Parties to align and submit NBSAPs, including national targets, with the Framework by COP 16 in October of this year. For those Parties unable to submit the full NBSAP, they are requested to submit national targets as a standalone submission by COP 16. Each COP, until 2030, will review implementation, beginning at COP 16. This review will include an analysis of how the NBSAPs or national targets are aligned with the Framework. Ms. Campbell explained the NBSAP process and what each Party will need to do (map existing national targets from their NBSAP and other plans to the Framework, revise or update their NBSAP, identify non-state actor commitments, ensure a whole-of-society approach and identify indicators to be used to monitor the NBSAP). She noted that decision 15/6 stresses the importance of coherence with national circumstances and capacities, integrating biosafety and access and benefit-sharing, facilitating involvement of all actors, and seeking synergies

with efforts under other MEAs and Conventions. Referring to annex 1 of this decision, she noted that Parties are requested to submit a national target for each goal/target of the Framework and report on these targets in their national reports. She noted the focus on ensuring that NBSAPs cover a wide range of topics, including ocean-related species and ecosystems, to meet the obligations in the reporting template, and the global review of progress, based on indicators, to take place at COP 17, following a procedure outlined in document [SCBD/SBI/4/4](#).

Key elements and considerations for implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework of relevance for cross-institutional coordination and cooperation

Under this agenda item, a series of experts presented on the key elements and considerations for implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework for cross-institutional coordination and cooperation.

Marine spatial planning

Michele Quesada da Silva (IOC-UNESCO) defined marine spatial planning (MSP) as a multisectoral process that has been increasingly adopted by countries to allocate human activities and conservation areas. Ms. Da Silva explained that UNESCO-IOC has provided support to countries mainly through the development of guidelines and capacity-development activities. It has also monitored the status of MSP worldwide through a survey, presenting the results as country profiles as well as in its State of the Ocean Report 2024. She further explained that MSPglobal is the IOC-UNESCO initiative designed to deliver this technical support, and one of its priority areas is to strengthen the link between MSP and marine protection and restoration, thus connecting it to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. At the global level, the project is co-developing with experts some new tools, such as a complementary guide on biodiversity-inclusive MSP. At regional level, MSPglobal has worked with several regional organizations to deliver training courses and organize regional MSPforums to exchange experiences between MSP practitioners.

Ecosystem restoration

Chris Corbin (Cartagena Convention) explained that the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, which administers the Regional Seas Programme for the Wider Caribbean Region, the only legally binding regional agreement for the protection and development of the Caribbean Sea, has been extensively involved in ecosystem restoration efforts to respond to the continued degradation of coastal and marine biodiversity in the region. Restoration is a core element of the Secretariat's work programmes on the control, reduction and prevention of marine pollution and for the protection and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity. Restoration has been recognized as a key element in several global and regional strategies and action plans that countries in the Wider Caribbean Region have endorsed and/or committed to achieve. While ecosystem restoration efforts were previously implemented mainly as a climate change adaptation response, recent restoration efforts have focused more on the implementation of nature-based solutions to address pollution reduction, especially from domestic wastewater pollution and for improving fisheries management. Critical to the implementation of ecosystem restoration efforts in the region has been the need to have an accurate assessment of the region's coastal and marine ecosystems focusing not only on the status of the ecosystem but also on the drivers and pressures from both land- and marine-based sources and activities. Restoration efforts will have minimal long-term success if the root causes of habitat loss and degradation are not addressed in an integrated and holistic manner.

Donor-funded projects including those by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) have played a catalytic role in supporting ecosystem restoration at national and local community levels. For more effective restoration in support of the Framework's targets, there will need to be greater integration of efforts across multiple sectors and especially more active engagement of private sector interests, such as the tourism sector, that depend on the coastal zone. It is important to ensure that future conservation and restoration efforts include the active involvement of local communities in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of interventions. There is a further need for upscaling and replication of successful restoration programmes building on lessons learned, best practices and using existing

guidelines. This will enable a more harmonized approach and greater impact. Restoration objectives should be clearly defined and, depending on the local conditions, should have both conservation and livelihood generation benefits. This will require ongoing training and capacity building to build multiple skill sets as well as further investment of financial and technical resources so that restoration becomes a key development option for countries.

Area-based conservation through protected areas and other effective area-based measures

Puri Canals (MedPAN) stressed that Target 3 of the Framework is much more than “30 x 30”. Fully meeting the target requires many objectives that may be classified in two main categories: i) Creation of new MPAs and OECMs (habitats, species, representativeness, connectedness, etc.) and ii) Governance and management (involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities, sustainable use, conservation outcomes, etc.). Furthermore, the implementation of these objectives is directly related to many other targets of the Framework. For both categories, it is crucial to involve many different institutions, from public administration bodies, to researchers, NGOs, indigenous peoples and local communities, donors and even the private sector. All of them may have representatives that may be operating at different levels (local, national, regional and international). Some examples of cross-institutional coordination and cooperation working on MPAs and OECMs:

- MedPAN which is composed of 131 organizations from 21 countries and represents more than 110 MPAs;
- The Global Network of MPA networks of managers, which includes MPA networks, national MPA agencies and other regional institutions; and
- The Blue Nature Alliance programme “Scaling Global MPA Capacity to reach 30 x 30”, through a system mapping methodology that involves actors from all around the world.

Ms. Canals explained that the Global Network, with some 25 partners, is an outcome of the EU Ocean Governance project that bases its cooperation on four axes: sharing information, knowledge and tools; building capacity; policy support; and financing. Among other activities, the project organizes training sessions to create new MPAs, OECMs, locally managed marine areas, and indigenous and community conserved areas; learning exchanges between managers of the Atlantic and Southeast Asia; and training sessions to restore coral reefs and mangroves with indigenous and local communities in Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. These experiences demonstrate that it is possible to connect actions from the global to the regional, national and local levels, by building the capacity of MPA managers and strengthening their networks. This approach helps to reach the qualitative dimensions of target 3 and may also be useful in the future in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries

Mark Dickey-Collas (IUCN-FEG) began by providing definitions for “biodiversity mainstreaming” and “mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries” and by illustrating the multidimensional nature of sustainability objectives in fisheries. He noted that care is needed to demonstrate that management conforms to the ecosystem approach, addresses the services and benefits that biodiversity provides and considers those communities most vulnerable, as highlighted by IPBES. Mr. Dickey-Collas noted that FAO has demonstrated that 600 million people rely on fisheries for employment from 3,417 species caught in targeted fisheries and that projections suggested that 22 per cent more food will be required by 2050 to feed humanity. He also noted that the FAO indicates that while 62 per cent of global fish stocks are fished sustainably, slightly more than 30 per cent are unsustainably fished, and there is an increased trend to unsustainable exploitation. Mr. Dickey-Collas highlighted that FAO and others were working to reverse this trend through its Blue Transformation (see the [State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024](#)). Substantial progress already been made towards mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries. Much work centred on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, especially Target 6, which had been built into standard guidance for fisheries. There is wide acceptance by fisheries of the accountability for their footprint of activities on biodiversity and the need to account for this in design of management measures and strategies. Much of this stems from the Reykjavik Declaration of 2023 and recent moves to ecosystem-based fisheries management across the globe, which has been documented by IUCN-FEG and FAO working together. Mr. Dickey-Collas identified the Framework’s targets that are especially relevant for fisheries as Targets 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11. Opportunities and challenges for mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries exist, and Mr. Dickey-Collas described issues around: governance; partnerships; restoration; information; urgency; area-based management; environmental impact assessment (in the BBNJ

Agreement); and ecosystem structure and function. Finally, he concluded by saying that fisheries should also be mainstreamed into biodiversity, rather than the current adversarial situation, and provided links to three relevant recent guidance documents: [Area-based Management Tools and Marine Fisheries; Fisheries and the Targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework - Opportunities, Challenges, and Concerns](#); and [A handbook for identifying, evaluating and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures in marine fisheries](#).

Connectivity and threatened species conservation and use

Amy Fraenkel (CMS) introduced a recent report of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the *State of the World's Migratory Species*, which was launched at CMS COP14. It found that global extinction risk is rising for both CMS-listed species and all migratory species. Among its findings were that 44 per cent of CMS-listed species have declining populations, and 97 per cent of CMS-listed fish are at risk of extinction. The top two threats for migratory species are overexploitation (including bycatch) and habitat loss or degradation, followed by climate change, pollution and invasive alien species. Ms. Fraenkel emphasized that the Framework is highly relevant to CMS and includes many key CMS priorities. In particular, it is vital that actions to implement the area-based targets, including Target 3, effectively address ecological connectivity – essential for the survival of migratory species, for genetic diversity, and for well functioning ecosystems. Another key priority is achieving the KMGBF species targets both for CMS-listed species that are commercially used, as well as for non-commercial species that are significantly impacted by bycatch. Increasing collaboration among CMS bodies, regional fisheries management and advisory bodies, regional seas bodies and others would help to turn the tide on these urgent matters.

Climate change and nature-based solutions

Sefanaia Nawadra (SPREP) first introduced SPREP, which began as a regional seas programme but became a Pacific intergovernmental organization in 1993 with 26 members, including 21 Pacific small island developing States (SIDS), and was given responsibilities in climate change, biodiversity, waste and pollution and governance; the ocean and marine management remain a core but as a cross-cutting objective across all thematic responsibilities. Climate change is existential to the Pacific SIDS, but island biodiversity is most at risk globally with highest rates of extinction, and many SIDS, especially atoll states, are drowning under a “sea of waste” generated from consumer goods entering the ocean region from beyond. Nature-based solutions provide an integrated approach to address the triple planetary crises in our region. Mr. Nawadra explained that their focus is on gathering information through science and traditional knowledge to better understand their context and what natural and other capital they possess to work with. Pacific intergovernmental organizations like SPREP and SPC are assisting SIDS to get the state of the environment and natural ecosystems to a level to enable it to be used for nature-based solutions through conservation, sustainable management and restoration. In the Pacific SIDS, 90 per cent of land ownership and coastal resource rights is held by indigenous communities meaning any development or management intervention needs to be through full consultation and engagement with them. Mr. Nawadra noted some Pacific initiatives like the KIWA Initiative, a 750 million Euro financing facility for nature-based solutions that provides assistance through two modalities – a small grants scheme for communities and a larger grant scheme for governments. A network has been established where governmental and non-governmental entities can share lessons, assist each other and form a community of practice for nature-based solutions.

Private sector engagement

Javier Garat Pérez (ICFA) began by recognizing the amazing work done by Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies in relation to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and thanking the Secretariat of the CBD for the SOI Global Dialogue. He proceeded to recognize the critical importance of sustainable fishing practices for both the environment and food security, emphasizing the balance between conservation and sustainable use of marine resources to alleviate strain on land resources. He emphasized that fishing is not the problem—it is part of the solution. He also appealed for continued support for effective fisheries management practices to rebuild and maintain fish stocks. Instead of prohibitions, he called for collaboration to ensure that 100 per cent of the stocks are sustainably managed. Finally, he suggested that collaboration between industry, governments, scientists,

regional seas organizations, regional fishery bodies and environmental non-governmental organizations is needed to implement the Framework.

Progress in uptake of the Global Biodiversity Framework in global and regional processes

Under this agenda item, a panel of selected speakers provided global and regional examples of uptake of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) in global and regional processes.

Mahesh Pradhan (COBSEA) introduced the COBSEA Marine and Coastal Ecosystems (MCE) Framework, adopted on 10 April 2023, which serves as the guiding document for COBSEA in providing regional and national support on marine and coastal environment conservation and management. The MCE Framework provides a clear direction to achieving global targets identified in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the KMGBF, focused on KMGBF Targets 1, 2, 3, 4 and 11. The Framework supports the second of the three thematic programmes of COBSEA's Strategic Directions 2023-2027: Marine and coastal biodiversity, ecosystem conservation and management. Anchored on the overarching theme of Blue Economy, it has three thematic areas: 1) Marine and coastal spatial planning, 2) MPAs and MPA networks, and 3) Marine and coastal habitat conservation and restoration. A COBSEA Working Group on Marine and Coastal Ecosystems has been formally established to provide long-term and strategic guidance on marine and coastal management in the region. On plastics and marine litter, the COBSEA is guided by its Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI) and engages in several ongoing projects, such as SEA circular (2018-2024) and MA-RE DESIGN (2022-2026). A GEF project on nutrient pollution related to KMGBF Target 7 is also ongoing. COBSEA is promoting nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based adaptation in supporting GBF Target 8.

Alexander Girvan (CLME+ / ProCaribe) introduced how the PROCARIBE+ project and its preceding projects implement the current 10-year transboundary Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the wider Caribbean region, which directly supports various multilateral environmental agreements. The PROCARIBE+ project and the Ocean Governance Coordination mechanism will support the development of a new 10-year SAP for the period 2026-2036. This new SAP will directly support the monitoring and implementation of the new KMGBF. The PROCARIBE+ project, through its various activities, will contribute to a number of KMGBF goals in collaboration with regional bodies of the Cartagena Convention, OSPESCA, CRFM and others, such as IOC-UNESCO. These include the development of new conjoined +88,000 km² mega MPA covering the Beata Ridge (between Dominican Republic and Colombia), new fisherfolk replenishment zones (contributing to Target 11) and work on the CITES-listed queen conch (Target 5). Work will be done in training and capacity building on MSP/MPAs and OECMs by the Cartagena Convention and IOC-UNESCO. Other work on the state of marine ecosystems and associated economies, an integrated reporting mechanism, is anticipated to contribute to Target 11, and work on mainstreaming blue carbon into nationally determined contributions and natural capital accounting will contribute to Target 14.

Sandra Grant (CRFM) focused on the CRFM Secretariat's uptake of the KMGBF and the UN Agreement on Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) in the wider Caribbean Region. The CRFM Ministerial Council, at its 17th meeting, endorsed the KMGBF and the BBNJ Agreement, and highlighted the need for regional and international donors and development partners to provide support and assistance to Member States. The CRFM reported on the work being done, in collaboration with regional and international partners, to support the KMGBF, such as marine spatial planning, MPAs, marine managed areas, OECMs, area-based management tools, sustainable fisheries resources and minimizing the impacts of climate change. Ms. Grant also noted work being done to provide social, economic and environmental benefits for people in the Caribbean, and tools for implementing and mainstreaming the KMGBF. The importance of collaboration and partnerships was also emphasized. Regarding the challenges to the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement in the Caribbean, support for Member States is required for ratification, domestication and implementation.

Mahmoud Hamza (SPA/RAC) described progress in uptake of the KMGBF in the Mediterranean within the Barcelona Convention. He explained that the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) works in synergy with six other Mediterranean thematic centers, all under the supervision of a Coordination Unit in Athens. They strive

to facilitate the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, which aims to protect the marine environment and the coastal region of the Mediterranean. Within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and based on the decisions of COP-21, they have developed the Post-2020 Strategic Action Program for the Conservation of Biological Diversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region, known as Post-2020 SAPBIO. Adopted at the end of 2021 by COP 22, the Post-2020 SAPBIO predates the KMGBF by a year but already anticipated its evolving draft. Today, the alignment between the two strategic frameworks is evident, both in vision and objectives, particularly regarding the 30 by 30 target. The main priority for SPA/RAC in 2024-25 is the implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO, including upgrading and expanding the Mediterranean network of MPAs and OECMs; developing a monitoring and evaluation system for MPAs and OECMs; upgrading the conservation status of Mediterranean endangered and threatened species and key habitats; supporting the countries in their national monitoring programmes within the ecosystem approach; and improving ecosystem resilience through a restoration programme. The Post-2020 SAPBIO aligns with other regional strategies, such as the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular for fisheries and aquaculture topics. Thus, when Mediterranean countries work towards achieving the objectives of the SAPBIO and GFCM Strategy, they simultaneously contribute to the conservation of marine resources and fisheries sustainability in line with the KMGBF. A proposal to host a sub-regional Centre to support the implementation of the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) for the Mediterranean region has been approved. Mr. Hamza concluded that by aligning their strategies with the KMGBF and mobilizing resources effectively, they are committed to making tangible progress towards their conservation goals.

Following the presentations by the panel, an open discussion/question-and-answer session took place. Following are some points that emerged from the discussion:

- It was asked what was meant by “transformative”, as there are many interpretations possible. It was suggested that “integration” of the targets into different areas of work is the real transformative part.
 - It was further suggested that the meaning of “transformative” differs from Party to Party, which could range from:
 - Increased capacity-building support for developing countries
 - More robust indicators to measure progress, supported by increased and improved data
 - Changes in the way that work under various intergovernmental organizations conduct their work, including their decision-making processes and the work of their secretariats
- The question of cooperation between intergovernmental organizations also emerged, with participants noting that there are different views on how to operationalize biodiversity mainstreaming and what issues are appropriate to discuss under the CBD.
- It was further emphasized that “30x30” is not the only aspect of the Framework and that work needs to be done across all targets, ensuring integration.
- Importance of MSP addressing land and sea interactions, as processes upstream influence the marine environment.
- Integrated marine and coastal area management (IMCAM) is not explicitly mentioned in the Framework, but that it is nonetheless important to the implementation of many of the targets, in particular Target 1 of the GBF in coastal areas.
- Participants also discussed the role of the private sector, particularly in the fisheries sector, to which it was noted that the fishing industry is involved in work under RFMOs, both through governments and as observers
- Participants also discussed sustainable finance for implementation, in particular for area-based conservation. It was noted that while there is generally much interest in, and sources of donor support for, the designation of MPAs, there is comparatively less interest in financing the effective management of MPAs and the enforcement of regulations. The creation of trust funds was mentioned as a possible tool. It was stressed that lessons learned on this topic, and in particular success stories and effective approaches, should be across regions.
- Certification schemes such as that of the Marine Stewardship Council, can contribute to sustainability.

- It was noted that there could be value in assessing the performance of RFMOs against how their measures are achieving sustainability of fish stocks and the impacts of fishing on ecosystems.

Monitoring Framework for Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Overview of the monitoring framework

In a pre-recorded video presentation, **Jillian Campbell (CBD Secretariat)** introduced the monitoring framework for the KMGBF. She recalled her earlier presentation about NBSAPs and how indicators are meant to be used for reporting. In their NBSAPs, Parties have agreed to use headline indicators and binary indicators in their national reports, which are due in February 2026, and a template for that purpose was just agreed at the last meeting of SBI in May of this year. She outlined the monitoring framework for the KMGBF, as adopted in decision 15/5, which includes: headline indicators, high-level indicators to capture the overall scope of the goals and targets, to be used across countries as a standard basis; binary indicators, based on binary responses to questions, which are also part of the core reporting template; component indicators, optional indicators that, with the headline indicators, would cover all components of the goals and targets; and complementary indicators, optional indicators for thematic or in-depth analysis. Parties are also encouraged to use any national indicators they may have available. Ms. Campbell showed a slide featuring the headline and binary indicators and noted that the indicators are structured in such a way that they do not go into detail on any ecosystem type and that almost everything is related to oceans in some way. For further details on the indicators, she referred participants to webinars organized by the Secretariat on each indicator, all of which are available at www.cbd.int/conferences/indicators-ahteg/webinars. She noted that this monitoring framework is a big step forward, as no monitoring framework was adopted along with the previous strategic plan. She also noted that financial reporting is also included in the national reporting template. She noted that that COP 16 will consider the work of the ad hoc technical expert group on: monitoring on standard methodologies for the indicators for all countries; guidance on considering section C of the framework when monitoring; synergies with monitoring the Protocols; proposal to use consistent disaggregation across the indicators, including for ecosystems and IPLC land tenure; and recognition of the need for investment in national monitoring systems. Ms. Campbell concluded by addressing the use of a consistent ecosystem disaggregation. The proposal is to use the “global ecosystem typology” developed by IUCN, at level 3, which is the “ecosystem functional group”, to try to understand what is happening in the different ecosystems (e.g., seagrass meadows, photic coral reefs, kelp forests); This approach would provide more detail than realms or biomes, allowing disaggregation of coral reef and seagrass, for example.

Regional breakout group discussion on monitoring, reporting and assessment of the KMGBF at the regional and global levels

Following this presentation, participants broke into regional groups to discuss monitoring, reporting and assessment of the KMGBF at the regional and global levels. Participants were asked to answer the following questions:

- *How can ongoing efforts for monitoring and assessment under other processes inform GBF reporting?*
- *How can regional and global organizations support national reporting?*
- *What types of regional assessments may be important for GBF reporting?*
- *What aspects of the monitoring framework are most relevant for reporting against?*

Results of this discussion are available in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of the breakout group discussion on monitoring, reporting and assessment of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at the regional and global levels

Discussion questions	Inputs from regional breakout groups
How can ongoing efforts for monitoring and assessment under other processes inform GBF reporting?	<i>East Atlantic African region</i> - Ensuring that other ocean sectors and other processes are aligned with the GBF, e.g., blue economy plans and strategies, linkages with the climate change process including the updating of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2025, emphasizing the importance of biodiversity in driving sustainable ocean-based socio-economic development - Alignment of reporting mechanism by using specified indicators <i>North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea</i> - EcAp/IMAP Process (UNEP/MAP): The Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) and the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) of UNEP/MAP provide a comprehensive framework for monitoring the status of the marine and coastal environment in the Mediterranean. The data collected through IMAP indicators (biodiversity, non-indigenous species, coastal ecosystems, and hydrography) can be directly used to inform the GBF reporting. By aligning indicators and methodologies, the consistency and comparability of data are ensured, facilitating integrated reporting. - MedQSR (Mediterranean Quality Status Report): The MedQSR offers a detailed analysis of the current state of the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment based on IMAP data. The findings and methodologies used in MedQSR can provide a robust baseline and ongoing assessments that contribute to GBF reporting, ensuring that national and regional reports are grounded in scientifically rigorous and region-specific data. - Post-2020 SAPBIO (Strategic Action Programme for the CBD in the Mediterranean Region): The updated SAPBIO provides strategic guidance and actions for biodiversity conservation post-2020. It emphasizes monitoring, reporting, and adaptive management, which align closely with GBF objectives. By integrating SAPBIO strategies and outcomes into GBF reporting, countries can demonstrate how regional action plans contribute to global biodiversity targets. <i>Wider Caribbean</i> - Most data is collected by fisheries ministries, and all countries send data to FAO. It comes down to the country's capacity to collect data - Mangrove monitoring - fisheries and forestry departments often don't have specific information on mangrove trends (IUCN monitoring is helpful) - Seagrass beds least monitored, but monitored under RAMSAR - Data collected by: Caribbean Protected Area Gateway, from UWI to OECS; CAMPAM data; MPA connect; BIOPAMA; NOAA - Potential burden of reporting when reporting the same data to multiple MEAs and organizations; how can SDG data collection systems respond to other reporting to reduce the burden of reporting?

	<i>Pacific Ocean basins & Indian Ocean</i> • SPREP had a GEF project that enabled the establishment of databases in all the countries that have carried out state of environment assessments more than once, and these have been used to report to CBD. Agreed regional indicators to supplement the headline indicators. • PICES also produces periodic ecosystem status reports but not known whether they will be used by member countries towards reporting. These reports are science focused and not produced with GBF reporting in mind. <i>East, South and Southeast Asia</i> • COBSEA has the Working Group on Marine and Coastal Ecosystem which is aligned to GBF and contributes to targets 1,2,3, 7: This can be a channel to report. • PEMSEA has the Mid-term Strategy (Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia Implementation Plan 2023-2027), and the Long-term strategy encompassing the component on Biodiversity Conservation and Fisheries Management, the progress report of which is submitted to the annual Partners Council Meeting. It reports on specific targets related to the GBF targets by taking inputs from the member countries. • BOBLME Project implemented by BOBP, SEAFDEC and IUCN has components related to Marine Management Areas, EAFM and OECMs and specific outcome indicators, some of which are aligned to the GBF indicators. The ongoing monitoring framework revision may factor the possibility of revising the indicators to align with the GBF indicators.
How can regional and global organizations support national reporting?	<i>East Atlantic African region</i> • Support updating national action plans and reporting • Adopt projects to achieve GBF targets • Through the establishment of regional hubs of GBF to provide technical support to regions on GBF issues, like policy alignment, capacity building and reporting indicators • Establish working groups at regional level (e.g., an expert group on MSP) <i>North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea</i> • Capacity Building and Technical Assistance: UNEP/MAP components including SPA/RAC provide training and capacity-building workshops to enhance the technical skills of national teams responsible for biodiversity monitoring and reporting. This includes training on IMAF indicators and methodologies, data management, and reporting tools. • Data-sharing Platforms: - InfoRAC IMAF Info System - UNEP/MAP Knowledge Management Platform (KMAP) - SAP/RAC MBP (Mediterranean Biodiversity Platform) - SPA/RAC MAMIAS (Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species Database) - MAPAMED (Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean Database)

- **Harmonization of Reporting Standards:** Regional organizations can help harmonize reporting standards and methodologies across countries, ensuring consistency in how data is collected, analyzed, and reported. This can involve developing guidelines that align national monitoring efforts with regional frameworks like IMAP and global frameworks like the GBF. Harmonization ensures that the data is comparable across different regions and scales, enhancing the quality and reliability of the reports submitted to the GBF. IMAP is aligned with both EU MSFD and GBF
- **Technical Support and Coordination:** Regional organizations can offer ongoing technical support to ensure countries effectively utilize these platforms. They can also coordinate regional working groups and expert networks that facilitate peer learning and the sharing of experiences, challenges, and solutions related to biodiversity monitoring and reporting. We are providing this support at UNEP/IMAP level

Wider Caribbean

- Regional organizations could help with synopsis but at the end of the day, it is national reporting
- Synergies among regional organizations are important to strengthen national capacities in the collection of national and regional data and information and reporting on the achievement of the targets
- Some prioritizations of what data to actually collect is needed, ensuring that data is also used for decision-making in addition to reporting
- Harmonization of methods for data collection across the region is needed
- Lab capacity is an issue for data collection for specific parameters in the region as the capacity to either conduct the analysis is lacking and/or the cost of analysis for those laboratories to conduct the analysis is very high and it needs to be sent outside of the region for further analysis

Pacific Ocean basins & Indian Ocean

- Countries lacking the capacity request help of regional organizations, so there isn't one approach that fits all. Assessment of capacity is a needed step. Example: Contracting parties requested Nairobi Convention to develop an operational indicator monitoring framework.
- RSOs can provide support for developing a common language and common definitions. However, it's a national responsibility to report, and the countries may not agree with conclusions or statements presented by RSOs.
- A regional centre of excellence/regional champion can provide training/capacity development within the region, if it is a mixture of developed/developing countries
- RSOs can also coordinate amongst the different actors/RFBs in a region to work towards common standards or language.
- Where there isn't full agreement between members on both indicators and methodologies/technical approach, then perhaps only qualitative assessments can be delivered
- Science-policy connection needs to be strengthened for member countries to see the value of the science and the assessment and reporting process

	• Development of indicators needs to be based on best science – RSOs can provide support. Best practices should be sought and promoted (some countries have a well-developed structure for biodiversity monitoring and reporting in place). This is something that should be regionally coordinated. <i>East, South and Southeast Asia</i> • Parties are currently updating their NBSAPs. The regional organizations can facilitate interaction among the countries to facilitate experience sharing which will help harmonize component indicators among the countries, thus aid in future regional comparison on specific indicators. • Regional organizations may review the NBSAPs, compare and synthesize the common indicators and integrate a mechanism to monitor the progress of in-house projects implemented by the regional organizations—both ongoing and upcoming—against the common indicators. • Regional organizations that host PhD students and research interns can also commission/ facilitate students' research on regional indicators and effectively contribute to the reporting process at the regional level.
What types of regional assessments may be important for GBF reporting?	<i>East Atlantic African region</i> <u>Status Reports:</u> • State of marine ecosystem reports • Transboundary assessment of shared resources • MPA outlooks – report on status of MPAs indicating target levels • Quality status reports • Research surveys and technology transfer <i>North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea</i> • Joint biodiversity assessments: Conducting joint assessments on marine and coastal biodiversity, non-indigenous species and ecosystem health in the Mediterranean can provide comprehensive and comparable data for GBF reporting. Collaborative efforts like the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (UNEP/MAP), the State of the Environment and Development in the Mediterranean (UNEP/MAP), the status of MPAs reports, and State of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries (GFCM) can serve as models for these assessments. • Thematic assessments: Focusing on specific issues such as marine litter, impacts of climate change on marine biodiversity, and the status of endangered species can provide detailed insights that are crucial for GBF targets. Thematic assessments can leverage the expertise and resources of multiple countries and organizations. • Socio-economic assessments: Assessing the socio-economic impacts of biodiversity changes and conservation measures can highlight the human dimension of biodiversity management. These assessments can support GBF by providing data on the benefits of biodiversity to local communities and economies, aligning with targets related to sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits. <i>Wider Caribbean</i>

- OSPESCA has the SIRPAC (Integrated System of Fisheries and Aquaculture Registration of the Central American Isthmus) on the organization's website. The system is fed by countries with information from vessel registration, aquaculture farm registration, fisheries production and aquaculture.
- The SIECA (Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration) has annual statistics on regional trade in terms of exports, imports and trade balance. The CCAD (Central American Commission for Environment and Development) has an Environmental Observatory.
- The SICA Integrated Statistical Information System (si-ESTAD) has demographic, social, economic, environmental and cross-sectional statistical information on the countries that make up SICA (Central American Integration System).
- CRFM: Annual monitoring landings, production, exports imports, fishers numbers employment numbers. Species composition (limited collection of this information). Developing database and website. Compiling information in excel and publishing it in Annual Statistics and Information report. Fisheries department collects in some cases seagrass and coral data.
- WECAFC: Implementing measures for the evaluation of fisheries and aquaculture data. The data is collected through 11 working groups that are part of the structure and work together with other organizations such as OSPESCA, CRFM, CITES, CFMC and IFREMER, on spiny lobster, queen conch, flying fish/dolphinfish, sharks, recreational fisheries, data and statistics, and others). There is also the SAG (Scientific and Advisory Group) that provides scientific advice to the Commission.
- Other Data Collection/Regional Seas/NGOS: Regional seas, ecosystem data, coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds, reporting requirement each two years, to report progress on commitments. Most reporting is qualitative not quantitative. They also report on the state of coral reefs reporting done by Global Coral reef network. NGOs normally collect the data.
- State of Marine Habitat report done by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat under CLME+ Project focused on the mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass beds; gaps in data collection. A similar assessment of the State of Marine Pollution also done under the CLME+ Project identified the major pollution stressors impacting on biodiversity.

Pacific Ocean basins & Indian Ocean

- Regional coordination and monitoring is particularly important in the marine environment due to transboundary species and non-static elements
- While countries have multiple reporting responsibilities, it is still the same ocean, the same institutions, the same people conducting the work for countries that need to report to multiple frameworks (SDGs, GBF). It's a challenge of coordination – national and regional.

East, South and Southeast Asia

- Regional organizations could be provided an opportunity to report on the regional status of the headline indicators while the national reports are collected from the countries directly. The experience of FAO collating monitoring data on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries from countries and RFBs simultaneously on national and regional implementation may be suitably integrated by CBD.

	- The team took stock of the potential assessments that have close alignment: - UNEP Global Environment Outlook Report - State of Ocean Report - State of Ocean and Coasts Report of PEMSEA - Regional Seas Programme Report of SACEP
What aspects of the monitoring framework are most relevant for reporting against?	<i>East Atlantic African region</i> - Different types of indicators (headline indicators, binary yes/no responses in national reports, component and complementary indicators) provide flexibility to national circumstances while enabling global aggregation. <i>North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea</i> - Biodiversity Indicators: Indicators related to species abundance, distribution, and health (e.g., those developed under IMAP) are directly relevant for GBF targets on species conservation, ecosystem integrity, and genetic diversity. - Pressure and Impact Indicators: Monitoring human-induced pressures such as pollution, overfishing, habitat destruction, bycatch and climate change impacts is essential for reporting on GBF targets related to reducing threats to biodiversity. - Governance and Policy Indicators: Tracking the implementation and effectiveness of conservation policies, legal frameworks, and management plans (e.g., through SAPBIO) provides insights into governance aspects critical for achieving GBF targets. - Socio-Economic and Cultural Indicators: Data on the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity, public awareness, and participation in conservation efforts are important for reporting on GBF targets related to sustainable use and community involvement. <i>Wider Caribbean</i> - Some of the headline indicators are more complex and more challenging to report on than complementary indicators - Indicators cover multiple thematic areas (e.g., forestry, mangrove) – coordination challenges - Adequate data collection on key fisheries data and pollution but there is limited data sharing at the regional level - Limited information collected on MPA effectiveness - MSP indicators often not biodiversity inclusive; there is global data collected every two years on status of MSP, but this data is largely qualitative. We need to know whether the MSP have specific biodiversity objectives. - Difficulties in collecting data for the coastal eutrophication potential although the issue of nutrients monitoring has been identified as a high priority for the region <i>East, South and Southeast Asia</i> - Status of transboundary fisheries stocks - Pollution

Following the reports back from the regional groups, a brief discussion took place including the following points:

- It was noted that some non-governmental organizations and civil society, such as the Coral Reef Monitoring Network, could be contributing to monitoring efforts if there were a mechanism for providing and evaluating such data.
- It was further noted some Parties had concerns about the role of non-state actors; it was suggested that an informal global dialogue could be considered after COP 16 to discuss the role of non-state actors, regional bodies, etc.
- It was also noted that we are working in a complex and entrenched political ecosystem and that therefore it will take some time for mainstreaming to take place.

Plenary discussion on means to scale up the uptake of the GBF into global and regional processes and support national-level implementation

Next, participants discussed means to scale up the uptake of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework into global and regional processes and support national-level implementation, and they raised the following points, *inter alia*:

- The NBSAP Accelerator Project is supporting Parties on updating their NBSAPs, using dedicated funding established with support from the Kunming Biodiversity Fund
- In the Caribbean, they are pooling resources to get some targeting training, to try to build the capacity in the regions
- An online meeting with relevant programme officers of the CBD Secretariat could be organized to extend the discussion, including on the best way to inform negotiations at COP 16, with the possibility of a side event
- Consider inviting the GEF Secretariat to such a side event at COP 16, inviting GEF focal points to spread some key messages at different levels
- Consider joint projects, such as between UNEP and FAO, which are multi-focal and multi-regional to bring together different perspectives. Engage with GEF teams for this purpose
- Spread awareness of the SOI Global Dialogue at key regional/local meetings where there is an opportunity; map out what is happening where there are strategic opportunities on ocean-related issues
- Consider bringing together other sectors for a dialogue, aware that fisheries and environment are two sectors that are interlinked around the world, but other sectors will vary in the extent of their interlinkages. Other sectors could, however, be meaningfully engaged, and we need to consider carefully and strategically which other sectors to engage in the future, including through regional mechanisms

E. AGREEMENT UNDER UNCLOS ON THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION

Overview of the BBNJ Agreement

Overview of the main elements and provisions of the BBNJ Agreement, its status, and issues relevant to RSOs and RFBs

Charlotte Salpin (DOALOS) provided overviews of the main elements and provisions of the BBNJ Agreement, of its status and of relevant issues for RSOs and RFBs.

Connectivity between areas within and areas beyond national jurisdiction

This agenda item, moderated by **David Johnson (GOBI)**, featured presentations by three panel members, followed by a plenary discussion guided by questions designed to elicit lessons learned and ideas on the theme of connectivity for the work of RSOs and RFBs in light of the recently adopted BBNJ Agreement.

Connectivity between areas within and areas beyond national jurisdiction: relevant elements of the BBNJ Agreement

Charlotte Salpin (DOALOS) presented on how the BBNJ Agreement, which addresses marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, addresses connectivity with areas within national jurisdiction.

On-going scientific work on connectivity

Amy Fraenkel (CMS) began by sharing her conviction that ecological connectivity is one of the most important priorities for biodiversity conservation. Ecological connectivity is essential for migratory species – including many fish species – as they rely on specific areas or types of important habitats and need to be able to access such areas over the course of their lifecycles. Ms. Fraenkel noted that the CMS COP has adopted specific mandates on connectivity and has significant ongoing work in this area, both on scientific and policy aspects. Recalling her presentation under item 4.2, she noted that connectivity is strongly reflected in the KMGBF, including in Targets 2 and 3, and is key to Target 1 on spatial planning and is also included in the eighth GEF replenishment cycle. She explained that CMS has a fairly unique legal status in that some of its provisions apply beyond areas of national jurisdiction and on the high seas. Specifically, CMS prohibits the taking of species listed in its Appendix I, an obligation that applies to Range States of a species, which is defined by the Convention to include a State, flag vessels of which are engaged outside national jurisdictional limits in taking that migratory species. In other words, CMS is concerned about migratory species wherever they are found. She continued by providing some specific examples of ocean species and challenges, including that migratory species need a series of particular sites at different times in their lifecycles. She noted initiatives on loggerhead turtles, angelshark and European eels, on which CMS is working with GFCM and other RMFOs, CITES, EU, IUCN, NGOs, ICES and the Sargasso Sea Commission. She noted a need to identify key sites and migration routes and noted that for many species, in particular sharks and rays, critical sites are not well known—a knowledge gap currently being closed by the Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRA) initiative led by IUCN and mandated by CMS Parties; CMS Parties have pledged to work with partners to identify ISRAs and Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs). She added that other threats to connectivity include mortality as bycatch, ship strikes, noise and light pollution. Finally, she introduced a new Global Partnership on Ecological Connectivity, launched at CMS COP 14, aimed at bringing together entities working in this area to multiply efforts and to help ensure that the KMGBF elements on connectivity are implemented. Core partners include CMS, IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, and WWF International; SCBD, Ramsar, UNCCD, ICLEI and World Bank have joined as additional partners. The partnership will focus on: data research and monitoring; policy and legislation; uptake and implementation; and awareness-raising and outreach.

Phénia Marras-Aït Razouk (French Biodiversity Agency) explained that although the BBNJ Agreement is not yet in force, various international consortia are already engaged in scientific and technical cooperation and work in pilot sites on the high seas. Many of these projects provide advanced socio-ecological analyses aiming at conserving ecological connectivity and supporting integrated governance schemes for marine protected areas networks, from the coast to the offshore and beyond. This involves governance approaches and options that leverage existing legal frameworks and area-based management tools from international frameworks and bodies. She provided some highlights from the work done by the French Biodiversity Agency and associated partners, within the Sargadom project and the Plankt'Eco project, with support from the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM). These projects focus on study cases for pilot sites in adjacent zones, between the EEZ and the high seas, in areas of “upwelling”: a permanent system, highly productive for zooplankton, generated by wind and sea currents with a high concentration of megafauna. The [Sargadom project](#) focuses on two remarkable high seas sites, which provide illustrative examples of the value of high seas ecosystems: The Thermal Dome in the Eastern Tropical Pacific and the Sargasso Sea in

the North Atlantic. The aim of the project is to contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and to facilitate the development of hybrid ocean governance approaches, including regional and international components. The [Plankt'Eco project](#) aims to provide knowledge on plankton ecosystems and their integration into fisheries and climate research. The programme's purpose is to share knowledge and develop scientific collaboration between countries in South America, West Africa and Europe. Relevant work on connectivity between areas within and areas beyond national jurisdiction is also provided by the science-driven processes on marine ecosystem connectivity, which identify important areas for migratory species such as birds (IBAs), marine mammals (IMMAs), elasmobranchs (ISRAs) and marine turtles (IMTAs). Some of these important areas have already been integrated into the CBD process to describe ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) at regional scale, some of which are located in the deep-sea and open ocean. More recent results could be useful for CBD efforts to update EBSA descriptions. Moreover, these important areas are also taken into consideration in other intergovernmental processes, including for Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs), under the International Maritime Organization (IMO). A recently adopted PSSA in the North-West Mediterranean aims to prevent cetacean collisions by recommending speed reduction measures. A Sargadom workshop, organized in November 2023, demonstrated the potential for these tools to support the BBNJ Agreement and enabled the identification of the risks arising in the Thermal Dome site from maritime traffic (physical damage to marine habitats or species, pollution, operational discharges) and the potential associated protection measures (e.g., traffic separation schemes, speed reduction measures, notification and reporting systems, pilotage regimes, areas to be avoided).

Participants then had the opportunity to engage in a discussion guided by the following questions:

- *What are other examples of the work of relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, focusing on connectivity between areas within and areas beyond national jurisdiction?*
- *What are the implications of connectivity between areas within and areas beyond national jurisdiction for the work of relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, in connection with the BBNJ Agreement?*
- *What are the potential areas for cooperation and coordination among relevant IFBs, including between RSOs and RFBs, in improving the scientific understanding of connectivity between areas within and areas beyond national jurisdiction, including to address existing knowledge gaps?*

Participants discussed the following, *inter alia*:

- The implications of measures taken under the Agreement for biodiversity within national jurisdiction and vice versa, and that references to “adjacent coastal States” are contained in the Agreement
- The importance of keeping in mind the connectivity between areas within and areas beyond national jurisdiction in the implementation of the Agreement
- How connectivity is relevant to various parts of the BBNJ Agreement
- The implications of the Agreement for RFMOs in ABNJ, and the responsibility of Parties to the BBNJ Agreement to promote the objectives of the Agreement when participating in decision-making under other relevant legal instruments, frameworks, or global, regional, subregional or sectoral bodies
- The important role of the Scientific and Technical Body (STB) under the BBNJ Agreement in addressing the issue of connectivity
- Lessons learnt from how existing IFBs address connectivity and implications for the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement

Measures such as area-based management tools (ABMTs), including marine protected areas; Environmental impact assessments (EIAs)

This agenda item, moderated by **Dominic Pattinson (OSPAR)**, featured presentations by four panel members, followed by a plenary discussion guided by questions designed to elicit lessons learned and ideas

on the elements of the Agreement on area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, and environmental impact assessments.

Key elements of the BBNJ Agreement

Charlotte Salpin (DOALOS) introduced key elements of the BBNJ Agreement on area-based management tools, including marine protected areas and environmental impact assessments.

Panel of selected global and regional examples

Joe Appiott (CBD Secretariat) delivered a presentation on the linkages and synergies between the work under the CBD and the BBNJ Agreement. Mr. Appiott emphasized that the BBNJ Agreement will play a key role in advancing the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. He highlighted how several areas of work under the CBD can support the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement. For example, with respect to the BBNJ Agreement's provisions regarding area-based management tools, including marine protected areas (MPAs), he noted the CBD process on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), the scientific guidance for selecting areas to establish a representative network of MPAs, including in open ocean waters and deep-sea habitats (decision IX/20, annex II), and the CBD programme of work on protected areas. He further highlighted CBD's work on OECMs, including COP decision 14/8. Additionally, with respect to the BBNJ Agreement's provisions regarding environmental impact assessments (EIAs), he noted the CBD voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in EIAs and strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) in marine areas (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/23) which provides guidance on biodiversity considerations at different stages of the EIA process. Lastly, he noted two key CBD COP decisions on mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors: decision 13/3 which focuses on the fisheries, agriculture, forestry, and tourism sectors, and decision 14/3 which addresses energy, mining, manufacturing, processing, infrastructure and health sectors.

Mauricio Pryor Moreno (CPPS) stressed that new realities configure new challenges, and these challenges require new solutions. Since the BBNJ Agreement creates a framework for collaboration between states, RSOs and RFBs to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity through the development and implementation of ABMTs and EIAs, it reflects an evolving approach to international governance. RSOs and RFBs may engage in various activities, including experience and knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, data and information-sharing, advocacy and outreach. Thus, they can contribute to policy development and guidance, leveraging their expertise and regional insights to support the objectives of the BBNJ Agreement. The research of new approaches like the "biozone," championed by Cristian Martis in the CPPS, illustrates the linkage between State Parties and RSOs in developing innovative measures to extend and strengthen the protection of the ocean. This collaboration underscores the importance of leveraging both state and regional expertise to address emerging challenges in marine conservation effectively.

Darius Campbell (NEAFC) shared some personal views that also reflect early discussions in NEAFC and with OSPAR under the collective arrangement. Mr. Campbell noted that the relevant bodies are already active in regulation in areas beyond national jurisdiction under the web of existing international instruments that most countries are tied into, which creates a complex framework of obligations, of which now the BBNJ will form another valuable part. During the negotiations for the BBNJ Agreement, some Parties to NEAFC emphasized the "Not Undermining" objectives, which reflected the requirements of governments to balance economic, social and environmental aims in the high seas. They also emphasize the need for all relevant organizations to work together under the BBNJ, each within their own expertise and competence. This conclusion applies to all parties to NEAFC to varying degrees—whether they supported the need for the BBNJ or not. Mr. Campbell then turned his attention to two key areas for NEAFC parties: ABMTs and EIAs. Beginning with ABMT, he noted that NEAFC has long-standing area-based measures for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems from bottom fishing. These measures are globally binding though the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and actively enforced and delivered. He also noted NEAFC's long history of cooperation and coordination with OSPAR, which also has MPAs in the same areas, has resulted in complementary measures for protection. In addition, ICES is a scientific advisor to both organizations, which provides a common basis on which to base discussions. He noted that while the BBNJ Agreement might not add

substance to this cooperation, in practice it has injected more energy to discussions. It is hoped that the BBNJ Agreement will further stimulate coordination on these measures with other competent organizations such as ICCAT, IMO and ISA. He noted that sectoral and regional bodies can add value to the BBNJ process through their experience and capacity, which they already share, noting that sectoral bodies such as NEAFC can add value for potential MPAs, complementing the biodiversity evidence with knowledge on actual human activities and pressures. Despite our collective arrangement, we do still have difficult discussions, resulting from our different priorities and starting points, but this is the essence of real engagement, understanding and compromise. Rather than “consultation”, as written in the BBNJ text, Mr. Campbell expressed his preference for “co-creation” of future ABMTs between the different bodies based on collaboration to identify biodiversity protection needs but also the human pressures and impacts and then agreeing together the relevant management under the different competences. Regarding EIAs, Mr. Campbell noted that while there are some EIA-like processes for vulnerable marine ecosystems, there are no other formal processes. He suggested that RFMOs should engage on this issue with FAO to ensure the minimum standards developed by the BBNJ will make sense for fisheries and not create perverse outcomes.

Jared Bosire (Nairobi Convention) noted that discussions on BBNJ have been ongoing for the past decade. While the Nairobi Convention does not have a mandate for this, Parties have discussed adjacency and connectivity between areas within and areas beyond national jurisdiction. The basis of discussions was on the fact that activities within national jurisdiction can have impacts beyond it. Parties have discussed collaboration on research to provide more information, resources and enhance awareness in the region. One of the concerns that arose is that there are many areas within national jurisdiction that we are not even managing. Why should we care about areas beyond? Nevertheless, as this area is a common heritage, our Parties need to get engaged. Mr. Bosire added that the BBNJ Agreement was discussed at their most recent science-policy conference, and a robust COP decision will be discussed at COP 11 in August this year concerning capacity-building, investment in research and regional collaboration to harness benefits.

Participants then had the opportunity to engage in a discussion guided by the following questions:

- *What are the linkages between the BBNJ Agreement and the work of relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, in relation to ABMTs/EIAs?*
- *How can the BBNJ Agreement contribute to the work under relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, in relation to ABMTs/EIAs?*
- *How may relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, contribute to the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement in relation to ABMTs/EIAs? What are the scientific and technical knowledge base, tools and guidance that can be shared?*
- *What are the challenges and opportunities to strengthen cooperation and coordination with and among relevant IFBs, including between RSOs and RFBs, to support the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement in relation to ABMTs/EIAs?*
- *What processes or mechanisms could the COP to the BBNJ Agreement consider establishing to promote cooperation and coordination with and among relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, in relation to ABMTs/EIAs?*
- *What other matters could be addressed by the COP to the BBNJ Agreement at an early stage in relation to the cooperation and coordination with and among relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, in relation to ABMTs/EIAs?*

Participants discussed the following, *inter alia*:

- The existing mandates of various competent IFBs with regard to the establishment of ABMTs, including MPAs, and EIAs noting that the BBNJ Agreement does not impede those IFBs from continuing to exercise this mandate
- The provisions and frameworks for cooperation that the Agreement provides, and the potential to further develop mechanisms for coordination with and among IFBs with respect to ABMTs, including MPAs, and EIAs

- The value of increased collaboration between RSOs and RFMOs with respect to fisheries and fishing activities with regard to ABMTs, including MPAs, and the potential for the BBNJ Agreement to support increased collaboration
- Existing ABMTs designated by IFBs in ABNJ and how such areas could be considered in the context of ABMT proposals to the BBNJ COP
- The significant amount of scientific work and networks created in the context of various competent IFBs that can be utilized for ABMTs, including MPAs, and EIAs in the context of the BBNJ Agreement
- Potential linkages between ABMTs and EIAs in the Agreement (e.g., the possibility of including provisions for EIAs as part of the measures for ABMTs)
- The responsibilities of flag States for the implementation of the ABMT and EIA provisions of the Agreement
- The critical importance of sufficient funding for ABMTs and EIAs under the Agreement

Marine genetic resources (MGRs), including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits; Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology (CB&TMT)

This agenda item, moderated by **Viktoria Varga Lencses (FAO)**, featured presentations by three panel members, followed by a plenary discussion guided by questions designed to elicit lessons learned and ideas on the theme of marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits, and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

Key elements of the BBNJ Agreement

Charlotte Salpin (DOALOS) provided an overview of the provisions of the Agreement on marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits, and on capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

Panel of selected global and regional examples

Alan Haynie (ICES) discussed the significant overlap of ICES work related to marine genetic resources and capacity-building with the BBNJ Agreement, as ICES supports the generation and dissemination of knowledge on marine science, including specifically understanding genetic diversity in the ocean. ICES working groups are open to experts around the world, and many are focused on issues related to BBNJ. He introduced three ICES activities relevant to marine genetic resources and capacity-building: 1) ICES Working Group on the Application of Genetics in Fisheries and Aquaculture; 2) ICES 2022 Annual Science Conference, which had a dedicated session on the prospects and opportunities for bringing together environmental-DNA and fisheries sciences; and 3) a training course on genetics in support of fisheries and aquaculture management. He also mentioned relevant ICES publications and discussed efforts to provide interdisciplinary knowledge to allow trade-offs related to ecosystem-based management that includes biodiversity objectives. He noted that ICES is committed to data-sharing and open-access publications and is continuing to promote inclusion and expanded participation in the ICES network and activities. He noted the Gender Equality Plan, the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, increased interaction with indigenous knowledge holders, and the Strategic Initiative on Integration of Early Career Scientists. ICES has Affiliate Institutes that enable increased collaboration with partners around the world. An ongoing need expressed by the ICES scientific community is more active exchange between scientists and policy makers to help interested scientists contribute to the most important policy issues.

Michele Quesada Da Silva (IOC-UNESCO) explained that UNESCO-IOC has experience with several key aspects of the BBNJ Agreement (e.g., marine scientific research, ocean observation, biodiversity data-sharing, capacity-development and transfer of marine technology), which can contribute to its implementation. Indeed, the agreement refers to IOC, particularly regarding support to the clearing-house mechanism. Ms. Da Silva showcased three of the current initiatives led by IOC: the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade); the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS); and the Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS). The Ocean Decade includes programmes and

associated projects working in ABNJ, a community of practice on Deep Sea Research and Management, and an Ocean Decade Capacity Development Facility that can identify and fulfill capacity needs. OBIS is a network of national and regional nodes, and a community of practice to collectively consolidate and disseminate marine biodiversity data, including data on marine genetic resources. To date, OBIS holds 126 million marine species observations, of which 23 million are based on DNA sequences (10 per cent of which was collected in ABNJ). ODIS focuses on the interoperability between existing data and information systems, thus improving the discovery of ocean information by end users. ODIS includes many records from ABNJ (documents, spatial data, biodiversity data). Looking to the future, Ms. Da Silva noted that IOC will pilot the development of a biodiversity data hub for the high seas. Further information about the work of IOC can be found in its [*“Non-paper on existing and potential contributions of IOC-UNESCO to the BBNJ process”*](#).

In a video presentation, **Andrew Hume (GEF)** explained how the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is supporting ratification and implementation readiness of the BBNJ Agreement. He began by introducing the role of the GEF as a financial mechanism, noting that it serves multiple multilateral environmental agreements through the GEF Trust Fund and additional funds. He explained that the GEF Council, its main governing body, has approved decisions regarding the Agreement, including amendment to the GEF Instrument to adopt the agreement as part of its governing instrument. Most recently, in February 2024, the GEF Council approved the allocation of US\$ 34 million focusing on ratification support and early action, as part of the current GEF-8 strategy (July 2022 – June 2026), under its International Waters Focal Area. This includes GEF Council document GEF/C.66/07: [*Initial Guidelines for Enabling Activities and Ratification Support Projects for the BBNJ Agreement*](#), which was developed in close consultation with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, which serves as the temporary secretariat for the Agreement. This BBNJ Initial Guidelines document is the best resource for understanding the GEF’s current support. The guidelines explain two parallel tracks of support: US\$ 29 million to all GEF recipient countries for national support, with US\$ 175,000 eligible per country; and a US\$ 5 million global and regional project. Both follow the normal GEF process, whereby the funds pass through one of the GEF Agencies and onto countries. For the purposes of the GEF-8 BBNJ support, the GEF identified three GEF Agencies to provide support – FAO, UNDP and UNEP. Countries can choose which of these three Agencies they wish to work with to access the national support, which consists of a series of umbrella enabling activities, similar to the convention support needs for NBSAPs under the CBD. He noted that the Operational Focal Points of all GEF recipient countries were notified of the funding availability in March 2024. In June 2024, FAO submitted the first funding request for four countries. The global and regional funding project is meant to complement the national support, through regional workshops, rosters of experts and other activities, and support regional bodies with a coordinating mandate on BBNJ, where possible. Also implemented by the FAO, UNDP and UNEP, this global and regional project is meant for the development of capacity-building and training materials; dissemination of this material through training workshops to build capacity; and support and facilitation to enhance national readiness for implementation. It is expected that the first draft will be submitted by the agencies before September 2024. Working with DOALOS, the GEF is coordinating with other organizations providing support for BBNJ ratification to avoid duplication of efforts. Mr. Hume concluded by noting that in preparation for the end of the GEF-8 strategy in June 2026, they will begin discussing GEF-9 as of 2025, with BBNJ considered from the start.

Participants then had the opportunity to engage in a discussion guided by the following questions:

- *What are the linkages between the BBNJ Agreement and the work of relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, in relation to MGRs/CB&TMT?*
- *How can the BBNJ Agreement contribute to the work under relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, in relation to MGRs/CB&TMT?*
- *How may relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, contribute to the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement in relation to MGRs/CB&TMT?*

- *What are challenges and opportunities to strengthen cooperation and coordination with and among relevant IFBs, including between RSOs and RFBs, to support the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement in relation to MGRs/CB&TMT?*
- *What processes or mechanisms could the COP to the BBNJ Agreement consider establishing to promote cooperation and coordination with and among relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, in relation to MGRs/CB&TMT?*
- *What [other] matters could be addressed by the COP to the BBNJ Agreement at an early stage in relation to the cooperation and coordination with and among relevant IFBs, including RSOs and RFBs, in relation to MGRs/CB&TMT?*

Participants discussed the following, *inter alia*:

- The importance for States of having a clear understanding of the Agreement and its implications for them
- The value of a capacity needs assessment to understand where the most pressing and urgent needs are for capacity-building and technology transfer for developing countries
- The important role of regional organizations in helping to enhance the awareness and understanding of the BBNJ Agreement among their members and to help identify and address capacity needs with respect to the implementation of the Agreement
- Various projects and work ongoing at the regional scale to identify and address capacity gaps at the country level of high relevance for the implementation of the Agreement
- The need for collaboration among capacity-building providers to avoid duplication and gaps
- The need for countries to have clarity on the various opportunities for, and sources of, support for the implementation of the Agreement

Engagement of relevant bodies in, and cooperation under, the Agreement

This agenda item, moderated by **Jihyun Lee (CBD Secretariat)**, featured a presentation by DOALOS followed by a breakout group discussion and a plenary discussion guided by questions designed to elicit lessons learned and ideas on the theme of engagement of relevant bodies in, and cooperation under, the BBNJ Agreement.

Overview of key elements of engagement of relevant IFBs in, and cooperation under, the BBNJ Agreement

Charlotte Salpin (DOALOS) provided a presentation highlighting the provisions of the Agreement which address cooperation with, and engagement of, relevant IFBs under the Agreement.

Following this presentation and some brief discussion, participants broke into regional groups for a discussion based on two questions on how to support member States in their region, first, in becoming Parties to the BBNJ Agreement; and second, for future implementation of the Agreement, including in terms of cross-sectoral cooperation (technical support, scientific and technical cooperation). These two broad questions are found at the top row of the synthesized template that follows, while three more specific questions are found in the rows to the left.

Table 2. Outputs of breakout group discussion on supporting member States in becoming Parties to the BBNJ Agreement, and for future implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, including in terms of cross-sectoral cooperation.

	In supporting member States in the region in becoming parties to the BBNJ Agreement	For future implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, including in terms of cross-sectoral cooperation
Describe challenges being faced in your respective regions	<i>East Atlantic African region</i> • Lack of comprehension of the instrument in some RFBs (importance and content) • Lack of awareness of the importance of the BBNJ Agreement by member States • Limited institutional, technical and financial capacity of member States <i>North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea</i> • Very different situation in North and South. • Additional communication to member countries about how the Agreement impacts IFBs • Discussion of the inclusion of indigenous knowledge • Uncertainty about how this impacts organizations • Need for capacity support • Diverse legal systems complicate alignments with BBNJ requirements; politics may delay engagement and coordination • Limited awareness and understanding of the Agreement among policymakers <i>Wider Caribbean</i> • Lack of countries' understanding in the wider Caribbean about their obligations and the implications for ratification • Understanding the implication of having high seas fisheries • Challenges for flag States that conduct fisheries on the high seas	<i>East Atlantic African region</i> • Revise the instruments of RFBs to align with the BBNJ agreement <i>North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea</i> • Capacity and data • Climate change • Challenges in cross-sectoral cooperation • Confidentiality / lack of access to data • Lack of institutional capacity in some countries to implement and enforce the BBNJ Agreement • Limited skilled personnel to handle the technical and administrative aspects of BBNJ implementation • Limited access in some countries to marine conservation technologies • Having multiple stakeholders in several countries involved together in the implementation process of BBNJ considering that countries resources may be different in the Mediterranean <i>Wider Caribbean</i> • Better understanding of the connection between BBNJ area and the EEZ in the Caribbean • Monitoring MPAs and OECMs to allow for demonstrating the benefits and impacts for coastal peoples in the region <i>Pacific Ocean basins & Indian Ocean</i> • Limited scientific data for decision making • Some regional bodies are sectoral and yet the scope of BBNJ is multisectoral

	• Pressures from NGOs to encourage ratification, but often not presenting the whole or accurate picture of ratification and focusing on a limited part of the agreement (e.g., 30x30 which is from the GBF) • Challenges being faced by a number of overseas territories to understand their obligations • Limited internal discussion on implications. Most discussions on the Agreement were done by the Permanent representative, but limited integration and discussion internally with fisheries authorities. • Lack of clear mandate for regional bodies, and funds not available for regional bodies • Sensitization of GEF focal points on the roadmap as a possibility for funding (though overseas territories are not GEF eligible for the roadmap funding) <i>Pacific Ocean basins & Indian Ocean</i> • Political polarization within countries • Lack of understanding or awareness of benefits to the countries • Decision making processes where consensus is involved and governments can't be forced to sign or ratify • Lack of equity and benefits sharing including limited trust, especially by developing countries • Limited capacity within member states • Countries without direct access to the sea <i>East, South and Southeast Asia</i> • Lack of understanding • Different ministries, and limited interagency coordination • Geo-political sensitivities • Need for further explanation to national stakeholders	• How to address activities of transnational companies operating in the sea • Limited technical capacity and resources in Regional Bodies • Limited human resource and infrastructure capacity within developing countries <i>East, South and Southeast Asia</i> • Creating national institutional mechanisms, whilst still ensuring integration • Inadequate clarity on overlaps with other instruments • Lack of coordination at national and regional level • Various authorities that have competency to designate ABMTs, but potential of conflict • Need for an effective knowledge base • Lack of harmonized methodology
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	• Potential concerns about changing/updating/creating new legislation for BBNJ • Balance between biodiversity, sustainable use and food security	
Describe opportunities emerging in your respective regions	<i>East Atlantic African region</i> • Existing regional economic communities like ECOWAS, SADC, COMESA and ECCAS and can be used to strengthen and advocate for ratification of the Agreement working together with the RFBs and RSOs • Cooperation between RFBs and RSOs should be strengthened <i>North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea</i> • Encourage collaboration and cooperation; growing framework of EBFM • Promote awareness of biodiversity issues • Increase awareness and value of data needs and challenges. • Increase awareness of work of OSPAR and ICES • Implement specialized capacity building program to enhance legal, institutional and technical capacities • Facilitate sharing of expertise and best practices among contracting parties • Leverage international funding opportunities and grants to support BBNJ-related activities • Support high-level advocacy to try to prioritize BBNJ agreement in national agendas • Use the ongoing harmonization process related to marine biodiversity policies and regulations across the Mediterranean <i>Wider Caribbean</i> • Opportunities for regional bodies to play a role in understanding and explaining the role of the agreement	<i>East Atlantic African region</i> • Existing specialized institutions in fisheries and sea conventions • Existing Regional economic communities • Attending mutual meetings • Existing mechanisms (GEF, UNEP, FAO, UNDP and DOALOS) for capacity development regarding BBNJ implementation <i>North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea</i> • Well-placed understanding can make the process successful • Showcase models of success in ABNJ • Available tools and data for MSP • Adapt training courses programs dedicated to BBNJ from regions with best practices to be shared and progress toward BBNJ and adapting it to the Mediterranean context • The existing very good research programs in the Mediterranean including through UNEP MAP system GFCM and partners • Need for partnerships • Sargasso Sea Commission: knowledge sharing from implementation of stakeholder engagement strategy under the GEF-UNDP-IOC-SSC project; may be able to provide lessons learned for ABMT design in other areas <i>Wider Caribbean</i> • Need an assessment project: An opportunity to understand what the challenges are for signature, ratification and implementation • Leveraging existing data

	• Ocean Coordination Mechanism (OCM) can potentially play a role as a champion and forum <i>Pacific Ocean basins & Indian Ocean</i> • Cooperation between countries to engage under Chatham rules for experience sharing • BBNJ opening up opportunities for countries to collaborate • BBNJ levels the imbalances between developed and developing countries • Landlocked countries or those with internal seas only have the opportunity to engage in BBNJ discussions <i>East, South and Southeast Asia</i> • Regional training with DOALOS for awareness • SOI framework for regional seas and regional fishery bodies • Conservation can be achieved through effective fisheries management	• Potential benefits for redistribution of benefits and transfer of MGR • Show the alignment with other regional and global commitments, potential links to SDG 14 SPAW protocol of the Cartagena Convention, and other goals <i>Pacific Ocean basins & Indian Ocean</i> • Biological connectivity offers an opportunity • Landlocked countries or those with internal waters only can become Parties to the Agreement • BBNJ implementation will encourage regional and inter-regional collaboration to share capacity and technical resources <i>East, South and Southeast Asia</i> • Find novel ways to develop new area-based conservation measures • Creation of a new institutional structure for BBNJ • Clear fast track procedure to recognize the existing sites • Bring together experts and institutions regularly
Identify priority actions/needs to address the above identified challenges and capitalize on opportunities	<i>East Atlantic African region</i> • RFBs to build capacity by continuing to be involved in global fora • Identify capacity needs of member states • Raise awareness among member states (invite experts to present). <i>North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea</i> • Communicate needs and encourage value of ratification • Encourage regional collaborative research to further improve monitoring and assessment of marine biodiversity including marine conservation technologies • Prioritize financing for regional conservation projects that address shared marine biodiversity	<i>East Atlantic African region</i> • Develop knowledge about applying the BBNJ Agreement in the region • Regional task force for the implementation • To apply and benefit from the capacity building programme put in place by the competent institutions as DOALOS/BBNJ to assist the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement <i>North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, and the Black Sea</i> • Proactively engage • Build useful tools to provide access to information • Develop more specific scientific capacity • Review and align national laws • Invest in building institutional capacities for BBNJ implementation

	resources, shared stocks, mobile species, transboundary MPAs / OECMs / FRAs • UNEPMAP system to catalyze exchange of best practices and expertise and enhance national capacities <i>Wider Caribbean</i> • Regional webinars by regional bodies to share information on the agreement, improve understanding, invite DOALOS for presentation and GEF, and act as forum to discuss the implications of the agreement for specific sectors i.e., fisheries and environment • Use communications materials prepared by DOALOS • Using National Intersectoral Committee on Oceans, to discuss internally the agreement and the roadmap signature and ratification as conversations have been primarily at the high-level • Use money related to ratification for more culturally responsive outreach • Collaborate with Regional Bodies on regional workshops • Use the Ocean Governance Coordination Mechanism in the wider Caribbean to present and discuss this issue as a champion • More involvement of IGOs and not just government <i>Pacific Ocean basins & Indian Ocean</i> • Capacity building to empower countries to engage • Creating change champions within countries through establishing dialogues at national level • Making a link between BBNJ and fisheries	• Secure funding • Conduct baseline assessment and promote best practices including use of technology in management and assessment of marine resources and ecosystems • Create mechanisms for coordination among different sectors (environment, fisheries, shipping, etc.) based on BBNJ requirements <i>Wider Caribbean</i> • Self-assessment toolkit will help countries to identify their gaps, what they need to ratify and implement • Possibility to pool needs assessment and do an integrated needs assessment on BBNJ to understand the implications of the agreement across the sectors (fisheries, pollution and environment) • Data on connectivity between EEZ is missing. This needs to be studied as a priority, as there is a lack of understanding of the implications of the Agreement due to lack of data which makes the implementation and ratification challenging <i>Pacific Ocean basins & Indian Ocean</i> • Inter-regional collaboration opens up opportunities for international bodies to engage and offer necessary support • Coordination in capacity building and implementation of different activities between different agencies and bodies at the same time during implementation <i>East, South and Southeast Asia</i> • Harmonized monitoring/reporting using innovative technology and tools; • Creating regional finance mechanism • Creating new secretariat, using existing mechanism
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	• Regional Bodies to align their respective mandates to global policy commitments including the BBNJ Agreement • Linking up with the interim BBNJ Secretariat <i>East, South and Southeast Asia</i> • Regional capacity-building with multi-stakeholders • Sensitize countries for GEF funds • Need for qualified resource persons • Organize inter-ministerial coordination meetings for BBNJ (with MOFA, Environment, Fisheries, etc.) • Raising awareness of existing ABMTs in coastal areas – creating MPAs or OECMs, resulting in increased catch	
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F. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE GLOBAL DIALOGUE

During this agenda item, co-chairs **Chris Corbin** and **Stefan Ásmundsson** discussed the achievements and status of the Global Dialogue as well as next steps. Mr. Ásmundsson began by recalling that fisheries and environment have long occupied separate silos in international relations. Looking back on 25 years of relations between OSPAR and NEAFC, for example, he described the mistrust as “comical” in retrospect and noted that the dynamics were not unique to the North Atlantic. He noted that, though there is still more progress to be made, the relationship has significantly improved over the years and that the SOI Global Dialogue has made a major contribution in this regard. He noted that it was a challenge to attract participants to the meetings of the Global Dialogue in the early years, due to the mistrust between the fisheries and the environment people, but that as it has become increasingly relevant, the mistrust seems to have disappeared, and there is high interest in attending. He lauded the valuable networking aspect of the dialogue, which has facilitated communications between organizations. He especially noted that fisheries organizations are now aware of the work of global organizations, whereas in the past, CBD decisions were not something that they thought about, and that the information did not trickle down to them.

He noted that the silo mindset often persists among some contracting Parties to the organizations represented at these meetings, who are not as well informed as the Secretariats have become. He emphasized the need to inform them so that they are more aware of the discussions emerging from the Global Dialogue, but questioned the best way to do so. He emphasized that the Dialogue should retain the same approach that it has developed over the years, and to leave room for any additional issues that may emerge between now and the next meeting. He commended the approach taken by the CBD Secretariat, to focus on cooperation and coordination, giving organizations the opportunity to share information about their activities.

Mr. Corbin expressed agreement with the thoughts and reflections as his co-chair. He acknowledged the contribution to the Dialogue of Mr. Dixon Waruinge, who recently retired as the Coordinator of the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, and who co-chaired the first three meetings of the Global Dialogue. He asked participants to consider three questions: 1) did they meet or speak to someone to whom they had never spoken to before this meeting? 2) did they commit to continue discussions with people they met? and 3) did they learn something about BBNJ or GBF that they did not know before? He indicated that the response to all questions would likely be in the affirmative, and therefore concluded that the power of bringing people together face-to-face should not be underestimated. He noted that this dialogue has provided an opportunity to increase knowledge and awareness and provided opportunities for further cross-fertilization, even within regions where we may tend to think we already know our regional colleagues. He went on to caution participants that we need to encourage greater cross-sectoral coordination, beyond fisheries and environment: we need to work with the private sector, tourism, the maritime industries and many other sectors. He encouraged others to gently nudge our constituent Parties toward better intersectoral coordination in a non-adversarial way and help to prepare them. We can come to the table through different perspectives but with a common goal. He indicated that there is always a possibility to improve the structure and format of the Dialogue and that he would like it to continue to work on regional roadmaps, with priority action points to move forward on the KMGBF and BBNJ. He indicated that he and his colleagues now have the challenge of taking forward some of the action points discussed and incorporate them, even though this was not formally done at this meeting. He noted his wish that the Dialogue build on the trust that has been established and for the two sectors to interact further.

Following the co-chairs' reflections, the floor was open for further discussion. Participants raised the following points, *inter alia*:

- There is a strong value in having a half or full day set aside before the formal start of the meeting for participants to meet within their individual regions. Bringing everyone together beforehand can be beneficial especially for those regions that otherwise lack the opportunities to meet on other occasions. This could be a potential idea for the next Dialogue.
- While participants noted the importance of intersessional meetings, some suggested that more regular information-sharing (e.g., a briefing every 3-4 months or a newsletter) would be helpful in preparing for the next Dialogue
- Having a list of participants in advance would facilitate networking among the participants and improve interactions throughout the meeting
- It is crucial to communicate the discussions of the SOI Global Dialogue at the global level (e.g., CBD COP, UN Ocean Conference) to build broader awareness
- Importance of increasing the effectiveness of existing structures and mechanisms, with no need to reinvent the wheel
- Regional organizations have a wide range of mandates that are tailored to their specific contexts and realities, presenting valuable opportunities for further cooperation
- Additional work is needed at national and regional levels to improve interministerial and cross-sectoral communication, dialogue, and cooperation
- Continued efforts are needed for SOI to emphasize the importance of ocean issues in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and beyond
- The SOI Global Dialogue Informal Working Group is an ongoing mechanism tasked with planning the next meeting of the Dialogue

Following the closing plenary discussion, the co-chairs officially closed the meeting.