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Items 10.1 of the provisional agenda**

MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY:

PROGRESS REPORT ON DESCRIBING AREAS THAT MEET THE CRITERIA FOR ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of Parties, at its tenth meeting, established a global process for describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, through the application of scientific criteria set out in annex I of decision IX/20, other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and inter-governmentally agreed scientific criteria, as well as the scientific guidance on the identification of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, which meet the scientific criteria in annex I to decision IX/20. The process is based on the organization of a series of regional workshops involving Parties and other Governments, as well as competent organizations and regional initiatives such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), regional seas conventions and action plans, and, where appropriate, regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) with regard to fisheries management (decision X/29, paragraph 36).

2. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) was requested to prepare reports based on scientific and technical evaluation of information from the workshops, setting out details of areas that meet the criteria in annex I to decision IX/20 for consideration and endorsement in a transparent manner by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, with a view to include the endorsed reports in a repository (referred to in paragraph 39 of decision X/29) and to submit them to the United Nations General Assembly and particularly its Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group, as well as relevant international organizations, Parties and other Governments (decision X/29, paragraph 42).

* Reposted with corrections to list of countries in the annex.

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3. The Conference of Parties noted that the application of the ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) criteria is a scientific and technical exercise, that areas found to meet the criteria may require enhanced conservation and management measures, and that this can be achieved through a variety of means, including marine protected areas and impact assessments, and emphasized that the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas and the selection of conservation and management measures are matters for States and competent intergovernmental organizations, in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (decision X/29, paragraph 26).

4. The Conference of the Parties emphasized that additional workshops are likely to be necessary for training and capacity-building of developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, as well as through relevant regional initiatives, and that these workshops should contribute to sharing experiences related to integrated management of marine resources and the implementation of marine and coastal spatial planning instruments, facilitate the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, and may address other regional priorities that are brought forward as these workshops are planned (Decision X/29, paragraph 37).

5. In line with decision X/29, the Subsidiary Body, at its sixteenth meeting, considered reports of two regional workshops convened by the Executive Secretary in Western South Pacific region (Nadji, Fiji, 22- 25 November 2011) and Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic region (Recife, Brazil, 28 February - 2 March 2012), as well as the UNEP-Mediterranean Action Plan Synthesis Report on the works carried out regarding the identification of EBSAs. The Subsidiary Body then prepared and submitted to the Conference of the Parties for consideration and endorsement, a “Summary Report on Description of Areas Meeting Scientific Criteria for EBSAs”, as contained in annex to SBSTTA recommendation XVI/4 (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/3).

6. In the same recommendation (XVI/4 Section B), the Subsidiary Body, recognizing that there was an ongoing scientific and technical process with respect to the areas in the North-East Atlantic¹, requested the Executive Secretary to include the revised results of the regional workshop for the North-East Atlantic, in the summary report prepared by the Subsidiary Body at its sixteenth meeting, before the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with the procedures set out in decision X/29.

7. Also in the same recommendation (XVI/4 Section B), the Subsidiary Body noted that workshops have not yet been held in some regions, and emphasizing that all regions should have the opportunity to participate in the process for describing areas that meet the EBSA criteria, requested the Executive Secretary to accord high priority to the organization of additional workshops, with a view to covering all regions where Parties wish workshops to be held, further requested the Executive Secretary to make available to Parties as soon as possible, before the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a schedule of regional workshops to be convened, and invited Parties, other Governments and donors to support these workshops.

8. Further to decision X/29, and SBSTTA recommendation XV/4, the present note has been prepared to report on progress in the organization of a series of regional workshops on the description of areas meeting EBSA criteria in the remaining regions, including:

¹ described in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/5 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/5/Add.1

- Section II of this note provides a summary report of the results of regional workshops convened in the Southern Indian Ocean (Flic en Flac, Mauritius, 30 July - 3 August, 2012) and the Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific (Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, 27 - 31 August, 2012);
- Section III provides a summary of progress with respect to the areas in the North-East Atlantic;
- Section IV provides a schedule of future regional workshops, including both those confirmed and those to be confirmed with regard to hosting countries, dates, necessary financial resources, and collaborating Parties, other Governments and organizations; and
- Section V describes related capacity-building activities.

9. This note complements SBSTTA recommendation XVI/4 (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/3), which, in addition to submitting a summary report on areas meeting EBSA criteria to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, deals with various other matters related to EBSAs, including the repository and information-sharing mechanism, capacity-building, and social and cultural criteria.

II. REGIONAL WORKSHOPS TO FACILITATE THE DESCRIPTION OF ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS (EBSAS) HELD INTER-SESSIONALLY

Southern Indian Ocean Regional Workshop

10. In collaboration with the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and with financial support from the Government of Japan, through the Japan Biodiversity Fund, the Executive Secretary convened the regional workshop for the Southern Indian Ocean, in Flic en Flac, Mauritius, from 31 July – 3 August 2011. The Government of Mauritius hosted the Workshop. The Government of Australia contributed to the scientific and technical preparation for the workshop through a technical support team from CSIRO. The workshop was preceded by a training workshop on EBSAs, convened by the Secretariat in collaboration with the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (30 July in Flic en Flac, Mauritius).

11. The workshop was held back to back with FAO's Regional Workshop on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) in the Indian Ocean (25 to 27 July 2012 in Flic en Flac, Mauritius), in order to facilitate collaboration between the Convention's work on EBSAs and FAO's work on VMEs, in line with the request from the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting. Sharing of scientific information as well as expertise was facilitated by both Secretariats in the course of organizing these two workshops.

12. Experts from the following countries participated in the workshop: Australia, Comoros, France, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, and the United Republic of Tanzania. Additionally, experts from the following organizations participated: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Seabed Authority, UNEP Nairobi Convention Secretariat, UNDP-GEF ASCLME Project, UNESCO-IOC Sub Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States; IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU Secretariat/Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals; IUCN Global Marine Program, IUCN/Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, Indian Ocean Commission, South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization, Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOC-ARC); BirdLife International, Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO), Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), Global Ocean Observing System for Indian Ocean (IGOOS), International Collective in Support of Fish Workers, Southern Indian Ocean Deepsea Fishers Association, Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association; Mauritius Oceanography Institute, Tanzania Deep Sea Fishing Authority, University of Nairobi, WWF Madagascar

& West Indian Ocean Programme Office. The workshop participants were selected from among nominations submitted by Parties in the region according to the specified selection criteria.² Observer participants were similarly selected, in consultation with the Nairobi Convention and FAO.

13. The workshop participants were provided with scientific and technical information,³ compiled by the technical support team, comprising the following data layers, *inter alia*:

(a) Biological data: catches of commercial pelagic species; habitat preferences of juvenile Southern Bluefin Tuna across their range, patterns of Green Turtle movement, IOSEA turtle feeding and nesting sites, prediction of deep sea corals, data sourced from the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS), historic whale catches, and important bird areas; and

(b) Physical data: seamount, Southern Indian Ocean Benthic Protected Area, global seascape, canyons, vents and seeps, and physical ocean climatology data include: temperature climatology, salinity climatology, oxygen climatology, nitrate climatology, silicate climatology, phosphate climatology, sea surface altimetry, SeaWiFS chlorophyll A, VGPM global ocean productivity, mixed layer depth climatology, frontal index and eddy kinetic energy, seamounts, vents and seeps, geology, climatologies, remotely observed data and derived oceanographic products.

14. The participants considered the geographic scope for the workshop, taking into account the GOODS biogeographic classification system. It was agreed that the scope would be the Southern Indian Ocean, bounded in the North by the northern coverage of the Nairobi Convention (10 degree North), in the South by the the northern boundary of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), in the West by the East coast of Africa (to include the Agulhas Current eco-region), and in the East by the boundary of the Western South Pacific EBSA Regional Workshop.⁴ Within this region, the area comprised the marine areas within national jurisdiction of member countries of the Nairobi Convention (Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa (Agulhas current eco-region only), and the United Republic of Tanzania) and of Indonesia (Indian ocean only), Maldives, Sri Lanka and the overseas territories of France, as well as marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. Marine areas under the national jurisdiction of Australia, India, and United Kingdom, where separate national processes are underway, were not included.

15. The workshop considered the scientific information on areas proposed as meeting EBSA criteria submitted by the workshop participants, using the template of the prototype EBSA repository⁵ as well as other relevant scientific documents/reports submitted by the workshop participants prior to the workshop.

16. In describing the areas meeting EBSAs criteria, workshop participants made use of the above mentioned information (paras 13 and 15 above), peer-reviewed scientific literature and information from quality-controlled sources such as scientific research/expedition reports produced by credible scientific research institutions as well as documents produced by competent national, regional and international bodies. Provision of traditional knowledge for the consideration of the workshop participants was not practically possible at the scale of regional workshop, and would require a separate steps at different scales.

² See Notification SCBD/STTM/JL/JG/79642 (2012-059), 24 April 2012;

³ See document UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SIO/1/2, *Data to Inform the CBD Southern Indian Ocean Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas*.

⁴ Refer to the map in annex VI to the report of the workshop (UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SIO/4; at the time of preparing this note, the report of the workshop was being finalized)

⁵ Submitted in response to notification SCBD/STTM/JM/JL/JG/79841 (2012-073), dated 16 May 2012, and presented in document UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SIO/1/3/REV2, *Compilation of Submissions of Scientific Information to Describe Areas Meeting EBSA Criteria in the Southern Indian Ocean Region*.

17. The workshop focused on open-ocean waters and deep-sea habitats as well as some proposals covering coastal habitats and features. It was agreed that it is acceptable to nest smaller areas meeting EBSA criteria within larger regional areas meeting EBSA criteria.

18. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 40 areas meeting EBSA criteria: Agulhas Bank Nursery Area; Agulhas Front; Agulhas slope and seamounts; Atlantis Seamount; Baixo Pinda – Pebane (Primeiras and Segundaos Islands); Blue Bay Marine Park; Central Indian Basin; Coral Seamount and fracture zone feature; Delagoa shelf edge, canyons and slope; Due South of Great Australia Bight; East Broken Ridge Guyot; Fools Flat; Iles Eparses (part of the Mozambique Channel); Incomati River to Ponta do Ouro (southern Mozambique); Pemba – Kisite - Shimoni ; Lamu-Kiunga area; Mahe, Alphonse and Amirantes Plateau; Moheli Marine Park; Morrumbene to Zavora Bay (Southern Mozambique); Mozambique Channel; Natal Bight; Northern Mozambique Channel; Offshore of Port Elizabeth; Pemba Bay - Mtwara (part of the Mozambique Channel); Prince Edward Islands, Del Cano Rise and Crozet Islands; Protea Banks and sardine route; Quelimane to Zuni River (Zambezi River Delta); Rufiji – Mafia- Kilwa; Rusky; Save River to San Sebastian; Saya de Malha Bank, Mascarene Plateau; South Java Island; Southern Madagascar (Part of Mozambique Channel); Sri Lankan side of Gulf of Mannar; Tanga Coelacanth Marine Park; Tromelin Island; Walters Shoal; Watamu Area; and Zanzibar (Unguja) – Saadani. Details are provided in the workshop report.⁶

19. Potential areas for future consideration were also noted in cases where description against EBSA criteria could not be carried out due to a lack of sufficient scientific data or of time for analysis.

20. The workshop also identified gaps in information, capacity needs, and needs for the further elaboration of areas meeting EBSA criteria. These include:⁷

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

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

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

21. The workshop considered the issues of ecological or biological connectivity in areas outside of the workshop boundary and noted the importance of some areas (e.g. Kerguelen Archipelago) for scientific collaboration and communication with future workshops. Connectivity is also important within the Indian Ocean in order to be able to decide on the distribution of species and whether there are particular source areas that would make more valuable EBSAs and this relates to both the shallow and deep-water environments. It was noted that due to some gaps in expertise present at the meeting,

⁶ Please refer to the appendix of annex IV of the workshop report UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/SIO/4).

⁷ Further details in annex VI to the workshop report (UNEP/CBD/ RW/EBSA/SIO/4); see also Section V of the present document.

discussion on some topics was limited (for example: genetic diversity, fish spawning /aggregation areas, and the distributions of several apex predators including pelagic fishes).

22. Participants expressed widespread appreciation for the EBSA workshop and for the fact that EBSAs were being described in the Indian Ocean region. Benefits of the regional workshop for country participants included: increased regional knowledge on marine biodiversity, new data to supplement spatial planning and assessment within territorial seas and EEZs, peer-review and constructive criticism that led to strengthened scientific application of EBSA criteria. In addition, the workshop provided important regional networking opportunities and laid foundations for future collaborations in regional planning and deep-sea research. The workshop background and discussions also enhanced participant's understanding of regional and international conventions, initiatives and research programs to support marine biodiversity conservation. There was widespread agreement that the description of EBSAs should not be a one-off process, and hence that this workshop was a first step, rather than a last step, for the EBSA process in the region.

Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific Regional Workshop

23. In collaboration with the Permanent Commission on South Pacific, the Executive Secretary convened the Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas, in Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, from 28 to 31 August 2012. The workshop was hosted by the Government of Ecuador. Financial support was provided by the Government of Japan, through the Japan Biodiversity Fund. The workshop was preceded by a training workshop on EBSAs convened by the Secretariat in collaboration with the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (27 August in Galapagos, Ecuador).

24. The meeting was attended by experts from Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru, as well as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States of America, the Permanent Commission on South Pacific (CPPS) Secretariat, South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization, Corredor Marino del Pacifico Este Tropical, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI), IUCN-WCPA, BirdLife International, Galapagos National Park, Instituto de Fomento Pesquero Chile/CPPS, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Valparaiso/CPPS, Universidad Catolica del Norte de Chile/CPPS, Universidad de Concepcion Chile/CPPS, Duke University (Technical Support Team), Conservation International-Ecuador, and World Wildlife Fund. The workshop participants were selected from among nominations submitted by Parties in the region according to the specified selection criteria.⁸ Observer participants were similarly selected, in consultation with the CPPS.

25. The participants made use of scientific data, collected in about 80 layers of GIS, to support their discussions. The information was prepared by the technical team commissioned by the CBD Secretariat through the financial support provided by the Japan Biodiversity Fund, and in collaboration with the members of GOBI. The support team also made available an open source GIS software, to allow participants manage the data compiled for the workshop.⁹

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

⁸ See Notifications SCBD/STTM/JL/JG/79653 (2012-061), dated 25 April 2012.

⁹ Submitted in response to Notification SCBD/STTM/JM/JL/JG/79841 (2012-073), dated 16 May 2012.

of the Western South Pacific EBSA Regional Workshop (Fiji, November 2011).¹⁰ Within this region, the area comprised the marine areas within national jurisdiction of Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru, as well as marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.

27. It was suggested that the northern part of the region, containing the California current and the natural corridors for marine mammals, fishes and birds, might also be considered by the North Pacific Workshop. It was also suggested that the southern part of the region, including the Patagonian biogeographic region could be considered in a future workshop, in collaboration with CCAMLR, covering the peri-Antarctic circumpolar area. Participants welcomed the offer of the expert from Chile to facilitate hosting such a workshop in Chile.

28. The workshop also considered the scientific information on areas proposed as meeting EBSA criteria submitted by the workshop participants, using the template of the prototype EBSA repository¹¹ as well as other relevant scientific documents/reports submitted by the workshop participants prior to the workshop. The workshop further considered the proposal of the Western South Pacific Regional Workshop to extend the Equatorial high productivity zone EBSA described by that workshop.

29. Participants gave due consideration to major oceanographic phenomena such as the Humboldt upwelling system and the Equatorial currents, as well as to areas of importance to various specific biological taxa.

30. Participants in the workshop agreed on the description of 21 areas meeting EBSA criteria: The Shared offshore foraging area (“White Shark Café”); Clipperton Atoll; The Guaymas Basin; Sipacate-Cañón San José Guatemala Marine Ecosystem; Gulf of Fonseca; Submarine Ridge of Malpelo; Eastern Pacific Thermal Dome; Marine Corridor of the Eastern Tropical Pacific; Equatorial High-Productivity Zone; Galapagos Archipelago; Carnegie Ridge – Equatorial Front; Gulf of Guayaquil; Humboldt Current Upwelling System of Peru; Permanent Upwelling Cores and Important Seabird Areas of the Humboldt Current System of Peru; Northern Chile Humboldt Current Upwelling System; Central Chile Humboldt Current Upwelling System; Southern Chile Humboldt Current Upwelling System; Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges; Seamounts in Juan Fernandez Ridge; West Wind Drift Convergence; and Grey Petrel’s feeding area in the South East Pacific Rise. Details are provided in the workshop report.¹²

31. Potential areas for future consideration were also noted in cases where description against EBSA criteria could not be carried out due to a lack of sufficient scientific data or of time for analysis.

32. The workshop also identified gaps in information, capacity needs, and needs for the further elaboration of areas meeting EBSA criteria. These include:¹³

- Training in data integration and networking to provide biodiversity information;
- Strengthening existing efforts in information networks;
- Improvement in access, availability and collaboration in fisheries data analysis, and monitoring fishing;
- Training multispecies analysis and ocean modeling;
- Strengthening in telemetry and satellite monitoring of pelagic organisms;

¹⁰ Refer to the map in annex VI to the report of the workshop (UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/ETTP/4; at the time of preparing this note, the report of the workshop was being finalized).

¹¹ Provided in the notification Notification SCBD/STTM/JM/JL/JG/79841 (2012-073), dated 16 May 2012.

¹² Please refer to the appendix of annex IV of the workshop report UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/ETTP/4).

¹³ Further details in annex VI to the workshop report (UNEP/CBD/RW/EBSA/ETTP/4); see also Section V of the present document.

- Funding for further study on EBSAs;
- Strengthening the capacity of information in deep sea areas; and
- Strengthening scientific support in particular for the Mesoamerican region in the Eastern Pacific (mainly the offshore area from the Gulf of Tehautepec until the Papagallo coast).

III. PROGRESS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC REGION

33. The OSPAR Commission (OSPAR) and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, held a North-East Atlantic Regional EBSA Workshop in September 2011. The report of the Workshop and a peer-review by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) were made available at SBSTTA-16. In providing these documents, the OSPAR and NEAFC Secretariats stressed that the North-East Atlantic Workshop was a scientific exercise that did not address policy issues. They also noted that the report had not been endorsed by the Commissions of either body and would be the subject of further scrutiny and internal processes. On the basis of the work to be carried out, both OSPAR and NEAFC will consider refining the descriptions of areas meeting the EBSA scientific criteria and presenting these to a future meeting of SBSTTA for consideration regarding any recommendations for inclusion in the EBSA repository.

34. By means of a letter of 30 July 2012, the Executive Secretary of OSAPR and the Secretary of NEAFC informed the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity that the organizations had not concluded their work regarding the description of areas meeting the scientific criteria for EBSAs, and confirming that this work would not be concluded in time for described areas to be included in the reports to be submitted to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties in line with SBSTTA recommendation XVI/4 (Part B). However, the executive heads of the OSPAR and NEAFC Secretariats noted that work on this matter in the two organizations would continue towards the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, with a clear commitment to basing any conclusion on the best available scientific information. They further reported that the issue of taking forward and further refining descriptions of areas in the North-East Atlantic meeting the EBSA criteria was discussed at the Annual Meeting of OSPAR in June 2012 where several relevant conclusions were reached. This issue, including the outcomes of the OSPAR meeting, will be discussed this year in NEAFC's Permanent Committee on Management and Science in October 2012 and at the NEAFC Annual Meeting in November 2012. As requested, by the NEAFC and OSPAR Secretariats, further information will be provided in an information document (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/38).

IV. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE REGIONAL EBSAS WORKSHOPS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

35. As noted above, the Subsidiary Body, at its sixteenth meeting, emphasizing that all regions should have the opportunity to participate in the process for describing areas that meet the EBSA criteria, requested the Executive Secretary to accord high priority to the organization of additional workshops, with a view to covering all regions where Parties wish workshops to be held, requested the Executive Secretary to make available to Parties as soon as possible, before the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a schedule of regional workshops to be convened, and invited Parties, other Governments and donors to support these workshops.

36. Accordingly, the Secretariat, in consultation with Parties and relevant organizations has developed a tentative schedule of workshops, as annexed to this note. The tentative schedule envisages achieving near-global coverage by the end of 2014, for the process for describing areas that meet the criteria for EBSA. Precise dates, and the final lists of participating countries and organizations, will be determined following further consultations with host countries, other Parties and Governments, and relevant organizations.

37. Thanks to the generous support of Japan, through the Japan Biodiversity Fund, the Secretariat has secured the necessary financial resources for the following two workshops to be held in early 2013, as well as associated capacity building programmes:

- (a) The South-East Atlantic Region (i.e. the countries of the west coast of Africa); and
- (b) The North Pacific Region.

38. Funds for the remaining workshops have yet to be secured.

39. The timetable set out in the annex would allow the outcomes of the remaining workshops to be considered by a meeting of SBSTTA prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, with a view to have the reports of SBSTTA considered for endorsement at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in line with the procedures set out in decision X/29.

V. CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

40. In line with decision X/29, the Secretariat has developed a training manual/modules on EBSAs and a draft version was reviewed by the Subsidiary Body at its sixteenth meeting.

41. As noted in the reports of the regional workshops, the workshops are contributing to strengthening capacities in the various regions in terms of knowledge and application of data to support the description of EBSAs. However, at its tenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties emphasized that additional workshops were likely to be necessary for training and capacity-building of developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, as well as through relevant regional initiatives. The need for enhanced capacity-building for EBSAs was also noted by SBSTTA in its recommendation to the Conference of the Parties (SBSTTA recommendation XVI/4, paragraphs 15-17).

42. Accordingly, for the two regional workshops for describing areas meeting EBSA criteria held since SBSTTA-16, the Secretariat has convened a training workshop ahead of each workshop. The training workshops aimed to explain the EBSA criteria and provide guidance on how they could be applied, using actual examples from the previous workshops. In general, the training workshops were very well received. However, the need for additional training was also expressed. At the workshop for the Southern Indian Ocean, for example, participants highlighted the need both for more time during the workshop to cover the issues satisfactorily and for more time between the training and the EBSA meeting to allow what is learnt to be assimilated and applied.

43. Taking into account these comments, and bearing in mind the large number of countries that will be involved in the EBSA workshop for South-East Atlantic Region (i.e. the countries of the west coast of Africa), the Secretariat is organizing a full-fledged capacity-building workshop prior to the EBSA regional workshop itself. This is planned for January 2013, approximately two months ahead of the EBSA workshop for the region. Consultations are currently underway with a potential host country as well as with potential experts and organizations to facilitate and contribute to the capacity-building programme. Similar capacity-building workshops may be considered for other regions, depending upon needs, the experience of this forthcoming workshop, and the availability of financial and human resources.

Annex: Tentative schedule of regional workshops to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (2013-2014)

Proposed regional workshop	Proposed Month/Year	Proposed Hosting Country	Potential collaborating Parties and other Governments (Tentative list; to be confirmed)	Potential collaborating organizations (Tentative list; to be confirmed)
Southeast Atlantic (Western African)	March 2013	Namibia (in consultation)	Morocco, Mauritania, Cape Verde, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Namibia, South Africa, and other Parties that can contribute relevant scientific information;	Abidjan Convention, and other organizations that can contribute relevant scientific information
North Pacific	March 2013	Russia (confirmed)	China, DPR Korea, RO Korea, Japan, Russia, Mexico, Canada, United States of America, and other Parties that can contribute relevant scientific information;	Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), and other organizations that can contribute relevant scientific information
Arctic	July 2014 (tentative)	TBD	Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Canada, United States of America	Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna - Biodiversity Working Group of Arctic Council, and other organizations associated with Arctic Council that can contribute relevant scientific information
North West Atlantic	September 2014 (tentative)	TBD	Canada, USA, Denmark, France, and other Parties that can contribute relevant scientific information;	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, and other organizations that can contribute relevant scientific information
Northern Indian Ocean, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and ROPME Sea area	November 2013 (tentative)	India (in consultation)	Countries participating in South Asian Seas Action Plan, Kuwait Convention and Action Plan, and Action Plan for Red Sea and Gulf of Aden; and other Parties that can contribute relevant scientific information	Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA), Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), and other organizations that can contribute relevant scientific information
East Asian Seas	January 2014 (tentative)	Indonesia (in consultation)	Cambodia, China, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, RO Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, other Parties that can contribute relevant scientific information	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) Secretariat; GEF/UNDP Partnership in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), and other organizations that can contribute relevant scientific information
