

**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/AHTEG-MCPA/1/3
26 November 2001

ENGLISH ONLY

AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT
GROUP ON MARINE AND
COASTAL PROTECTED AREAS
First meeting
Leigh, New Zealand
22-26 October 2001

REPORT OF THE MEETING**1. Background**

1. The decision to establish the *Ad hoc* technical expert group on marine and coastal protected areas (MCPA AHTEG) was taken by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in its decision IV/5 (annex). The expert group was established to assist the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in its work on the topic of marine and coastal protected areas, and to help implement programme element 3 (marine and coastal protected areas) of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity. The terms of reference for the group were approved by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting (decision V/3).

2. The MCPA AHTEG met for the first time in Leigh, New Zealand from 22 to 26 October 2001. Funding for this meeting was generously provided by the Governments of New Zealand and the United States of America, and the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. Logistical support for the meeting was provided by the New Zealand Department of Conservation. The location of the meeting was Goat Island Marine Reserve - the first no-take marine reserve established in New Zealand. The meeting used the University of Auckland marine laboratory facilities, and an adjacent camp ground. This was an experiment in holding meetings in basic field accommodation at an appropriate field location, both to reduce costs and to enhance the scientific and technical

nature of the meeting. The members of the group expressed strong agreement with this choice of venue, and the format of meeting that arose from this field location assisted the development of a strong sense of cohesion among the group.

3. The members of the expert group were selected from nominations provided by national focal points, in accordance with the *modus operandi* of SBSTTA (decision IV/16, annex I). The selection was undertaken by the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body. The experts were selected based on their competence in the relevant field of expertise, with due regard to geographical representation and to the special conditions of least-developed countries and small island developing states.

4. The expert group comprised representatives of 15 countries: Brazil, Chile, Guyana, Indonesia, Lithuania, Morocco, New Zealand, Philippines, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, St Lucia, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States of America. Experts from Australia and Croatia were also selected to participate in the group, but were unable to attend the meeting. In addition, observers from the IUCN World Congress on Protected Areas, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and the United States funding agency participated in the meeting. The Executive Secretary also invited the following international organizations to take part in the meeting as observers: United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere Programme, the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and selected UNEP Regional Seas Programmes. Unfortunately these organizations were unable to attend.

2. Opening of the meeting and organizational matters

5. The opening of the meeting consisted of an opening statement given on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity and a welcoming statement given by a representative of the Government of New Zealand. In addition, the representative of the Executive Secretary gave a presentation explaining briefly the CBD, the Jakarta Mandate and the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity, and then proceeded to explain in more detail the mandate of the expert group, the organization of work, timetable and expected outputs.

6. The meeting elected Mr. Murray Hosking from New Zealand as Chair. Ms. Paula Warren, the SBSTTA Bureau representative acted as the Rapporteur. The group adopted the agenda as written.

3. Substantive issues

3.1 Review and discussion of substantive agenda items

7. The group undertook considerable work during the week, including reviewing and discussing the following:

1. Status of marine and coastal protected areas globally
2. The value and effects of marine and coastal protected areas on marine and coastal biological diversity
3. Criteria for selection of marine and coastal protected areas
4. Identification of linkages between marine protected areas and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity
5. Identification of knowledge gaps, particularly in understanding the value and effects of marine and coastal protected areas on sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources, and on population size and dynamics; and identification of existing efforts to fill those gaps

The desk study prepared by the Executive Secretary was used as a basis for discussion for items 1 through 4.

8. In discussing these items, the group focused on identifying a general framework for consideration of these issue, and identifying priorities and knowledge gaps to be further considered during the intersessional period. Although some interim conclusions were drawn, these are not being reported in detail, as the group wishes to reconsider them in light of intersessional work. Nevertheless, the group reached a very high level of consensus on key philosophical issues underlying their work.

9. The group agreed that marine and coastal biodiversity is increasingly threatened, that part of the reason for this is the low level of effective marine protection, and that MCPAs are a vital mechanism for addressing at least some of these threats. Further, the participants supported, as a vision for the future, the concept of a comprehensive and representative global system of MCPAs, where the full range of marine and coastal ecosystems are managed to maintain their structure and functioning, to provide benefits for present and future generations. The nature of such a network, and its design and implementation were then discussed further and were identified as one of the focus areas for intersessional work.

10. It was also recognized that there are significant limitations in our knowledge about

- What MCPAs exist
- How effectively they are managed
- What biodiversity is protected by the global MCPA network

11. Regardless, the available data does indicate that the current global MCPA network is inadequate, and likely only protects a very small proportion of marine and coastal biodiversity. Some gaps, such as high seas areas, can easily be identified.

3.1 Identification of issues for intersessional work

12. The members of the expert group proceeded to identify a number of key issues, which will be addressed during the intersessional period, and established a process for undertaking this work. These issues fit into five general categories, as follows:

a) Global Goals:

13. It will be necessary to identify clear, concise goals for a global MCPA system. Such goals should be forward thinking and facilitate acting for the future. Global priorities for MCPAs will have to be consistently derived, and include goals for the types of habitats and ecosystems which should be protected, and the types of protection which should be applied. This may lead to a CBD strategy to address such priorities.

14. It is recognized that a full evaluation of the existing global MCPA system would require fit for purpose, up to date inventory data, which should include information about:

- area and number
- level of protection
- compliance level
- habitat, ecosystem, biogeographic zone
- part of functional network or in isolation
- intent and purpose
- accuracy of data

Such data is not presently available on a global scale.

15. Evaluation of the effectiveness of a global MCPA network will also require clear, concise measures of success, including guidance on how to recognize success and illustrative examples.

b) Ecological aspects

16. The experts identified several key issues for future work, which related to ecological aspects of MCPAs and MCPA networks. These included

- Ecosystem functioning, life histories and ecological linkages in MCPA networks, and how these may function at regional and global levels
- Relationships between fish, fisheries and biodiversity, including habitat change as result of ceasing of fishing activities, seeding grounds and spill-over values
- Genetic diversity of marine biodiversity and how this might affect priority-setting in MCPA design

- Changes in MCPAs over time – when does poor become good or good become poor? Why do changes occur?
- EIA and similar mechanisms for controlling activities that might affect MCPAs and networks.

c) Design and implementation of MCPAs and networks

17. Some of the key issues addressed during the intersessional period will have to do with the design of effective MCPAs and networks, and the consideration of MCPAs as an integral part of a wider framework of integrated marine and coastal area management. As part of this, the group will deliberate the sequence of creation of MCPAs in order to provide advice for countries that are just getting started in the process. Best/wise practices, including matters relating to local applicability and validation, will also be incorporated. In addition, it was considered important to identify what MCPAs and networks cannot achieve.

18. The group will also consider levels of protection and the available tools to achieve desired results. In particular, the relationship between biodiversity protection, levels of use, and tools to deliver protection will be considered. It is not presently known whether this relationship is linear (eg. does greater protection bring about more conservation of biodiversity?). Related to this, the expert group will consider an analysis of long-term costs versus real levels of protection of no-take, versus multiple use areas, including set-up versus ongoing running costs.

19. In addition, the effects of MCPAs in relation to environmental changes (alien species, climate change and ocean circulatory processes), and the effects of these considerations on network design, were identified as issues for future work.

d) Social, cultural and economic benefits

20. Social, cultural and economic benefits of MCPAs were identified as a key issue for intersessional work, and included the following:

- Non-monetary valuation of marine biodiversity (e.g. moral, intrinsic, and future values) illustrated by examples
- The role of MCPAs in application of the precautionary principle, especially as insurance against over-fishing and acceleration in recovery from adverse events
- Social and economic benefits of implementing networks.

e) Funding and public awareness

21. MCPAs operate in the context of the surrounding society. Public attitudes, understanding and compliance are important for the success of a MCPA. This includes the use of traditional knowledge (and its validation) in establishing and maintaining MCPAs. Social and funding support (including potentially compensation for the loss of benefits that might arise from creation of MCPAs) may be necessary for local communities.

22. In addition, it is necessary to improve communication between science and management, including consideration of the different attitudes of scientists, managers and politicians, in ensuring that the best possible information is available for decision-making.

4. Intersessional work and preparation for the second meeting

23. The expert group will do further work on the key issues identified in the previous section during the intersessional period, and produce text for the substantive document. In order to facilitate this, five working groups deliberating each of the five topics have been formed. Based on the intersessional work, the group will identify key areas for future research, including potential pilot projects. These will be deliberated further during the second meeting. The group will finalize its work, including the written text, during the second meeting, which is tentatively scheduled to be held in the beginning of May 2002.

24. The Bureau, Secretariat and AHTEG will be using a range of mechanisms to ensure wide input into the work. In particular, a broad informal advisory group is being established, to operate as a listserver. This group is already providing information on some key questions related to research and monitoring needs.