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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Report of the First Inter-Agency Meeting of UN-Oceans

25–26 January 2005
UNESCO-IOC, Paris, France

ADVANCE COPY

The IOC hosted the first meeting of the Oceans and Coastal Areas Network (subsequently named UN-Oceans) in Paris, in January 2005. The group discussed its terms of reference and its organization. It unanimously elected the IOC Executive Secretary as Coordinator of UN-Oceans; it also called on the IOC Secretariat to serve as the implementing secretariat for UN-Oceans. Four UN-Oceans Task Forces were established: (i) on Post-Tsunami Response; (ii) on the Regular Process for Global Assessment of the Marine Environment; (iii) on Biodiversity in Marine Areas beyond National Jurisdictions; (iv) on the Second Intergovernmental Review of the Global Programme of Action for Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The first UN-Oceans meeting was held in IOC-UNESCO on the 25–26 January 2005. The following institutions were represented: CBD; FAO; IAEA; IMO; IOC-UNESCO; ISA; UN-DESA; UN-DOALOS; UNDP; UNEP/GPA; WMO; and the World Bank. The list of participants is attached in Annex I. The meeting was chaired by P. Bernal.

II. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

UN-Oceans elected by consensus Patricio Bernal (UNESCO/IOC) to serve as the Coordinator for UN-Oceans for a two-year term. **It also elected** Anne Rogers (UN-DESA) to serve as the Deputy Coordinator for a two-year term.

III. RULES OF PROCEDURE

Meeting for the first time and recognizing that the Network was informal, UN-Oceans members discussed its terms of reference and organization as well as the focus of their debates using as guiding documents:

- The Report of the United Nations System's Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB/2003/7, 8 October 2003), Section 3. Oceans and Coastal Areas,
- The Terms of Reference for the Oceans and Coastal Areas Network presented by Patricio Bernal at ICP-04, and
- The Text from the resolution ACC/1993/19.

A. Scope and Objectives.

The objective of UN-Oceans Network is to enhance cooperation and coordination among Secretariats of the International Organizations and Bodies concerned with ocean related activities. **UN-Oceans noted** the goals adopted by WSSD, namely:

- Maintenance of the productivity and biodiversity of important and vulnerable marine and coastal areas and implement the Jakarta mandate on biodiversity;
- Application of the ecosystem approach by 2010 for the sustainable development of oceans;
- Promotion of integrated goals and ocean management at national and regional levels;
- Establishment of a UN inter-agency mechanism on oceans and coasts;
- Implementation of fishery capacity management measures by 2005;
- Elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries by 2004;
- Maintenance or restoration of depleted fish stocks on MSY levels by 2015;
- Development of networks of marine protected areas by 2012;

- Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities to achieve substantial progress by 2006;
- Development of integrated water resources management plans by 2005;
- Accelerate development of measures to address invasive species in ballast water; and
- Establishment of a process for global marine assessment by 2004.

It also recognized the requirement for effective coordination and cooperation at the origin of the establishment of the Network by the 57th session of the UN General Assembly (A/RES/57/141) and the strong connection with the Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS, hereafter called ICP) and the functions the latter identified for the Network (from *Terms of Reference for the Oceans and Coastal Areas Network (UN-Oceans) presented at ICP-4*):

- a. Strengthening coordination and cooperation of the UN activities related to ocean and coastal areas;
- b. Reviewing the relevant programmes and activities of the UN system, undertaken as part of their contribution to the implementation of UNCLOS, Agenda 21, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI);
- c. Identification of emerging issues, the definition of joint actions, and the establishment of specific task teams to deal with these, as appropriate;
- d. Promoting the integrated management of ocean at the international level;
- e. Facilitating as appropriate, the inputs to the annual report of the Secretary General on oceans and the law of the sea;
- f. Promoting the coherence of the UN system activities on oceans and coastal areas with the mandates of the General Assembly, and the priorities contained in the Millennium Development Goals, the JPOI and of governing bodies of all UN-Oceans members.

B. Composition and Participation

UN-Oceans noted that in order to cover political, legal, security, economic, social, and environmental aspects, it should include, in addition to the former SOCA members, international financial and other institutions like the International Seabed Authority and secretariats of multilateral environment treaties. In this respect, the members noted with satisfaction the attendance of the CBD and the ISA in addition to the members of the former SOCA.

UN-Oceans agreed that any secretariat in the UN system may become a member through a simple expression of will. In the list that follows, all the organizations that participated in the previous work of SOCA, or in the informal coordination for the ICP meetings have been included, as well as those organizations that have expressed their interest to participate. An explicit call has also been made to financial institutions. The list of

potential members includes: UN-DESA, UN-DOALOS, FAO, UNESCO, UNEP, World Bank (IBRD), IMO, WMO, UNDP, IAEA, CBD, ISA, ILO, UNIDO, WTO, WHO, UNHSP (“UN-HABITAT”), UNFCCC, Ramsar, UNCTAD, UNU, OECD, and IHO.

In accordance with the or guidelines of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) at its second regular session of 2003 (CEB/2003/7), **UN-Oceans agreed** that the participation of relevant international NGOs and other international stakeholders in the work of the UN-Oceans Task Forces should be encouraged under the responsibility of the lead institutions coordinating the task forces. **UN-Oceans also agreed** that I-NGOs should be invited to contribute to the activities of the task forces and might be invited to attend selected items of the UN-Oceans agenda.

C. Modus Operandi

UN-Oceans agreed to operate as a flexible mechanism to review joint and overlapping ongoing activities and to support related deliberations of the ICP, coordinating as far as possible its meetings with ICP sessions. To that effect, the Organizing Secretariat was based in UN-DOALOS (see Section H. Secretariat).

UN-Oceans agreed to pursue time-bound initiatives, with well-defined terms of reference, through ad hoc Task Forces open to the participation of NGOs and other international stakeholders as required. These task forces, coordinated by a lead institution (with mandate and major activities in the specific issues being considered) will foster collaboration around existing joint activities (e.g. the UN Atlas of the Oceans (UNAO) or the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment (GPA)), already developing efforts (e.g. the Global Marine Assessment, GMA) as well as new emerging activities UN-Oceans will identify. The task forces will also collaborate as required with other existing and relevant mechanisms such as the Global International Water Assessment (GIWA), the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) and the Global Oceans Observing System (GOOS).

D. Programme of work

UN-Oceans agreed that, in preparing its programme of work, it will take into account: (i) the Programme of Work adopted by the Governing bodies of each institution; (ii) the recommendations of existing inter-agency coordinating mechanism; and (iii) the programmatic framework of recommendations from the JPOI and the ICP, taking into account new and emerging issues that will require the attention of the network, as well as reporting requirements or needs.

E. Reporting

The Organizing Secretariat (see Section *H. Secretariat*) shall act as a focal point in the process of reporting to UN mechanisms such as the ICP or the UNGA. The lead institutions responsible for Task Forces will also coordinate reports of their work to UN-Oceans and, as relevant, to the Organizing Secretariat.

F. Meetings

UN-Oceans plans to meet once a year in conjunction with the regular ICP process, and may hold special sessions when required. For its deliberations, **UN-Oceans agreed** to make maximum use of electronic communication, holding meetings as far as possible in conjunction with other related meetings and to operate in a transparent manner including through the use of a dedicated website.

G. Officers

UN-Oceans decided that the Coordinator of UN-Oceans and a Deputy Coordinator shall normally be elected for a term of two years. In order to ensure consistency, UN-Oceans will aim at avoiding that both the Coordinator and the Deputy Coordinator end their term at the same time.

H. Secretariat

UN-Oceans shall be provided with adequate secretariat support to ensure its smooth and effective functioning. To decrease the financial and human resource requirements for providing secretariat support, **UN-Oceans decided** to establish a “distributed secretariat”, with functions divided into an Organizing Secretariat and an Implementing Secretariat:

The Organizing Secretariat established in UN-DOALOS will, in consultation with the Coordinators, assist the Network in meeting its reporting requirements, including coordinating the preparation of its reports and organizing meetings.

The Implementing Secretariat established in UNESCO/IOC will, in consultation with the Coordinators, assist the Network in strengthening cooperation, reviewing the relevant programmes and activities, and promoting the coherence of the UN system activities on oceans and coastal areas (Terms of Reference a, b, and f above). The work of a secretariat in this regard would be:

- To compile information about existing programmes and activities as outlined in Section *D. Programme of Work*, including existing inter-agency cooperation mechanisms and newly created task forces, and to make this information available to the partners (either in the form of a regularly updated status report and/or as an on-line information tool);
- To maintain this information as a dynamic communication and information service (perform regular reviews and updates);
- To critically review this information within the framework of UN mandates to bring to the attention of the partners any potential gaps, duplications, or possible areas for collaboration;
- To follow up any actions developed by UN-Oceans that do not fall under the responsibilities of either the organizing secretariat or one of the task forces;
- To work closely with the organizing secretariat to provide this compiled information and syntheses for use in any necessary reporting activities.

IV. TASK FORCES

1. UNO Task Force on Post-Tsunami Response

Participants provided an overview of the activities of their respective institutions related to the post-Tsunami international response.

Participants were briefed on the UNESCO/IOC strategy for establishing an Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System, part of a global, multi-hazard and integrated system. In light of the UNESCO/IOC International Coordination Meeting for the Development of a Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System in the Indian Ocean, to be held in Paris, 3–8 March 2005, IOC will invite the interested UN-Oceans agencies to the meeting. UN-Oceans members agreed to examine the agenda of the meeting with a view to identify targeted contributions from individual agencies and programmes to advance the implementation of such warning system.

With a view to maximize UN coordination on the Tsunami response and to increase its visibility, **UN-Oceans agreed** to establish a dedicated Task Force on Post-Tsunami Response. The Task Force, contributing to the broader UN system response to the Tsunami Disaster, and led overall by UNESCO/IOC would have three major sub-tasks:

- (i) Coordinate the contributions of UN-OCEAN agencies in support of the establishment of an early warning system in the Indian Ocean. In this respect, UNESCO/IOC will inform UN-Oceans agencies on the outcomes of relevant meetings, including the forthcoming Ministerial Meeting, in Phuket, Thailand, 28–29 January 2005. A coordinated input on Tsunami response to the UN Secretary General Report will be provided through UN-Oceans. **UN-Oceans agreed** that this activity will be led by UNESCO/IOC.
- (ii) Act as a clearing house mechanism providing information on the various post-event assessments, related to natural resources, socio-economic, livelihoods, and sectoral aspects of ocean and coastal areas, that are being implemented by UN agencies, programmes, and other UN-Oceans partners. **UN-Oceans agreed** that the UN Atlas of the Oceans would provide a platform for hosting this metadata information in a directory form. FAO as host of the Atlas has agreed to take the lead in defining a template that each agency/programme can use to report their respective assessment activities, as well as a structure for the specific web page.
- (iii) Provide technical assistance through the development of Key Principles for Coastal Reconstruction in Tsunami-affected countries based on Integrated Coastal Management approaches. UNEP/GPA informed the group that it was developing Key Principles for Sustainable Coastal Reconstruction, which would be ready for circulation by the end of January. UNEP/GPA noted that these Key Principles would be discussed at a meeting on Coastal Zone Rehabilitation and Management in the Tsunami-affected Region being convened by UNEP in Cairo on 17 February 2005 (to which UNEP/GPA invited all UN-Oceans members to attend). In this regard, the World Bank presented the meeting with an initial set of draft Guiding Principles for Recovery and Rehabilitation in the Coastal Zone. It was agreed that it would be useful for these efforts to be combined, with the goal of a developing a common set of guidelines that could be reviewed and collectively endorsed by UN-Oceans. It was agreed that UNEP/GPA would take the lead in this sub-task,

and make use of the Cairo meeting to coordinate the implementation of an action plan for the application and development of the proposed principles, as well as additional targeted guidelines on coastal and oceans aspects, including possibly fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, water supply and sewage collection and treatment, coastal engineering, livelihood, ports management, etc., that may be developed by other members of UN-Oceans.

It was also agreed that a sub-website would be developed under either the UN-Oceans/IOC site or the UN Atlas of the Oceans /FAO website. This website will contain a compilation of existing and future guidelines that will be developed in the framework of this Task Force, including those resulting from the Cairo process noted above.

2. UNO Task Force on the Global Marine Assessment

UN-Oceans agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Task Force among the core institutions participating in the Regular Process for Global Assessment of the Marine Environment (GMA). **UN-Oceans agreed** that UN-DOALOS will take the lead as the convening organization for the Task Force, but noted that another organization may take the lead upon approval of the establishment of a start-up phase and the “Assessment of Assessments”. As convening organization, UN-DOALOS has subsequently suggested that the purpose of the Task Force would be:

- (i) To monitor developments regarding the regular process;
- (ii) To make concerted proposals on the establishment of the start-up phase and the full establishment of the regular process;
- (iii) To define the participation and contribution of all relevant organizations;
- (iv) To ensure that the relevant competent international organizations, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system are prepared to carry out the functions entrusted to them, including ensuring that they support any task force established by Member States; and
- (v) To effectively contribute to an established start-up phase and full regular process.

In preparation for the Second Workshop on the Regular Process (13–15 June 2005), the functions of the Ad Hoc Task Force would be as follows:

- (i) Formulate a common position encouraging States to agree on the establishment of the start-up phase and launch the “Assessment of Assessments”, and
- (ii) Coordinate the position of the relevant organizations during the meeting of the Second Workshop, including through the organizations of consultations (in person or through emails) prior to the workshop and during the workshop.

UN-Oceans reviewed and discussed briefly the status of GESAMP. Some participants noted that the discussion of the Regular Process must advance beyond the current situation before any meaningful discussions on GESAMP restructuring and financing could take place. Nonetheless, DOALOS, IMO, IAEA and FAO expressed their interest to support the evolution of GESAMP irrespective of the outcome of the Regular Process and to continue

using this mechanism to deal with serious scientific issues raised by the participating organizations. IAEA reported that the Monaco Government has shown interest to co-fund the GESAMP office at the Marine Environment Laboratory in Monaco. Negotiations are under way.

3. UNO Task Force on Biodiversity in Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdictions

The purpose of this task force, proposed by the CBD, will be to coordinate information input to the General Assembly, the CBD, and other international processes dealing with biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. The expected outputs of this task force should focus on:

- (i) A consensus of the global distribution of biodiversity (including genetic resources) in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, as well as the status of this biodiversity and the threats that it is under.
- (ii) A consensus on what tools (within the international and regional legal regime) are available for the conservation and sustainable use of this biodiversity.

The task force will operate primarily via email, and its initial tasks will consist of reviewing background documentation for the Ad Hoc Open-ended informal Working Group on Biodiversity in Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdictions, for the CBD Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Protected Areas, and other relevant meetings and processes. These tasks will be expanded as appropriate to ensure active information sharing between organizations working on the issue of biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. **UN-Oceans agreed** that CBD would lead this task force.

4. UNO Task Force on the Second Intergovernmental Review of the GPA

The purpose of this task force, proposed by UNEP/GPA, will be to provide support and guidance on preparations for the second intergovernmental review (IGR-2) of the GPA, scheduled to be held in 2006. These preparations will also contribute to the achievement of the GPA-related goals elaborated in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the further mainstreaming of the ecosystem approach in the management of marine and coastal environments.

UN-Oceans agreed that UNEP/GPA would serve as convening secretariat for this task force. UNEP/GPA has indicated that it will circulate an initial briefing note and draft ToR for the task force in the near future.

V. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION

UN-Oceans agreed in principle to hold the next meeting in conjunction with the upcoming ICP meeting in New York, 2–3 June 2005.

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