



SUMMARY OF THE SECOND GMA INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP: 13-15 JUNE 2005

The second International Workshop on the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects (GMA), was held from 13 to 15 June 2005, at UN headquarters in New York. The workshop brought together over 100 representatives from governments and intergovernmental organizations.

The second International Workshop set in place the first building blocks of the "Assessment of Assessments," the startup phase of the GMA process, a stocktaking and gap analysis of existing assessments of the state of the marine environment. Under John Roberts' able chairmanship, delegates agreed on the features, aims and organizational structure of the "Assessment of Assessments." A few difficult questions were left for the General Assembly to decide upon, such as the funding of the "Assessment of Assessments," and the composition and decision making of its steering committee, the body created to oversee this exercise.

Such a positive course was probably facilitated by avoiding the controversy concerning the inclusion of living marine resources in the GMA's scope, the main point of contention at the first International Workshop. Although delegates evaded this debate, with the decision to involve FAO in the "Assessment of Assessments," the management of marine living resources may make its way into the future GMA.

The conclusions of the workshop will be presented to the UN General Assembly at its 60th session for further action.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LAW OF THE SEA AND THE GLOBAL MARINE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

On 1 November 1967, Malta's Ambassador to the UN, Arvid Pardo, asked the nations of the world to recognize a looming conflict that could devastate the oceans. In a speech to the UN General Assembly, he called for "an effective international regime over the seabed and the ocean floor beyond a clearly defined national jurisdiction." The speech set in motion a process that spanned 15 years and saw the creation of the UN Seabed Committee, the signing of a treaty banning nuclear weapons on the seabed, the adoption of the declaration by

the General Assembly that all resources of the seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction are the common heritage of mankind, and the convening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. These were some of the factors that led to the convening of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea, during which the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted.

UNCLOS: Opened for signature on 10 December 1982, in Montego Bay, Jamaica, at the third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS sets forth the rights and obligations of States regarding the use of the oceans, their resources, and the protection of the marine and coastal environment. UNCLOS, which entered into force on 16 November 1994, comprises 320 articles and nine annexes, and is supplemented by the 1994 Deep Seabed Mining Agreement and the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement (FSA). Since the entry into force of UNCLOS, three relevant international bodies have been established: the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

UNCED: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in June 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted in Rio, addresses "the protection of the oceans, all kinds of seas, including enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, and coastal areas and the protection, rational use and development

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the Law of the Sea and the Global Marine Assessment Process.....	1
GMA-2 Report.....	3
Conclusions to be Submitted to the General Assembly.....	3
Closing Plenary.....	8
Upcoming Meetings.....	8



of their living resources.” The provisions of Chapter 17 are the fundamental framework for action to achieve the sustainable development of oceans and seas.

UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL DECISION 21/13 AND FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS: At its 21st session (5-9 February 2001, Nairobi, Kenya), the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) adopted decision GC/21/13 on the “Global assessment of the state of the marine environment,” whereby the Governing Council requested UNEP to explore the feasibility of establishing a regular process for the assessment of the state of the marine environment. Following this decision, two meetings were held (12-14 September 2001, Reykjavik, Iceland; and 18-20 March 2002, Bremen, Germany) to consider possible modalities for the process.

The Reykjavik meeting was the first stage in exploring the feasibility of an assessment process. The meeting strongly agreed that a regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects (GMA) was both desirable and urgently needed. The meeting recommended that, among other things, the GMA process be: aimed at policy makers; based on scientific assessment of the global marine environment and provide its target audience with advice, guidance and assistance on actions required to mitigate environmental impacts and changes; and set up to allow for feedback and review.

The Bremen technical meeting was convened to further elaborate the key objectives, define the practical framework, and consider possible models for establishing a GMA process. The meeting agreed that a prerequisite step in the GMA process was to evaluate existing major assessments of the state of the marine environment and to identify the scope, status and timing of future assessment activities carried out under relevant national, regional and global organizations. It was proposed that a review of the scope, status and timing of existing and forthcoming assessment and assessment-related activities be carried out under relevant national, regional and global organizations. This review, which identified gaps in the coverage and means by which they could be addressed in the global assessment process, was done in 2002 by the UNEP/World Conservation Monitoring Centre, in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC/UNESCO) and was published in January 2003.

The conclusion of these meetings was that the GMA process should be established on existing assessments activities, in order to facilitate the provision of scientific and socioeconomic information for policy makers.

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (26 August-4 September 2002, Johannesburg, South Africa) negotiated and adopted two main documents: the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. Among the 11 chapters of the JPOI, which provides a framework for action to implement sustainable development commitments, Chapter IV on “Protecting and Managing the Natural Resource Base of Economic and Social Development” contains several paragraphs on the sustainable development of oceans. Paragraphs

30 to 36 address: sustainable fisheries; the advancement of implementation of programmes relating to the protection of the marine environment against pollution from land-based activities; the promotion of conservation and management of oceans; the enhancement of maritime safety and protection of the marine environment from pollution; and the improvement of the scientific understanding and assessment of marine and coastal ecosystems. Paragraph 36(b) requests establishing “by 2004 a regular process under the UN for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects, both current and foreseeable, building on existing regional assessments.”

UNGA RESOLUTION 57/141: On 12 December 2002, the 57th session of the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/141 on “Oceans and the law of the sea.” In response to paragraph 36(b) of the JPOI, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare proposals on modalities for the GMA, drawing on the work of UNEP pursuant to decision GC/21/13.

UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL DECISION 22/1 II: At its 22nd session (3-7 February 2003, Nairobi, Kenya), the UNEP Governing Council reviewed progress in implementing decision GC/21/13, and adopted decision GC/22/1 II, which requests the active participation and contribution of UNEP to the preparatory process for the GMA, as called for in UNGA resolution 57/141.

UNGA RESOLUTION 58/240: In response to UNGA resolution 57/141, the Secretary-General prepared a report containing proposals on modalities for a regular process for the GMA (A/58/423). The report reflects discussions held at an inter-agency consultative meeting at IOC/UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, from 8-9 September 2003. At its 58th session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/240, on “Oceans and the law of the sea,” which requested the Secretary-General to convene the fifth meeting of the UN Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS-5) from 7-11 June 2004. On the basis of the proposals on modalities for the GMA contained in the Secretary-General’s report, this resolution also requested the Secretary-General to take further steps to establish the regular process, including convening an international workshop in conjunction with UNICPOLOS-5, to consider a draft document prepared by a group of experts on, *inter alia*, the scope, general framework and outline of the process.

GROUP OF EXPERTS ON THE GMA: In response to General Assembly resolution 58/240, the Secretary-General convened a Group of Experts, which met from 23-26 March 2004, in New York, to prepare for the GMA process. The Group, chaired by David Pugh, IOC/UNESCO, was composed of representatives from States, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including scientists and policy makers. The discussions resulted in a draft document for submission to a GMA International Workshop in June 2004. The document details the scope, general framework and outline of the regular process for the GMA, as well as issues pertaining to quality assurance, institutional arrangements, capacity building and funding. The Group concluded that the marine assessment process should address all dimensions of marine ecosystems, including the physical and chemical environment, biota, and socioeconomic aspects. The geographic



scope of the assessments should span coastal and estuarine waters through ocean basins, taking account of terrestrial and atmospheric influences. The Group also recommended the establishment of a Global Scientific Assessment Panel.

FIRST GMA INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP: The first GMA International Workshop took place in conjunction with UNICPOLOS-5 (7-11 June 2004, New York). The International Workshop recommended that the General Assembly invite the Secretary-General to establish a task force to oversee the next stage of preparatory work for the GMA.

UNGA RESOLUTION 59/24: At its 59th session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/24, on "Oceans and the law of the sea," which requests the Secretary-General to convene the second GMA International Workshop from 13 to 15 June 2005, to continue considering issues relating to the establishment of the process, including its scope and a task force to initiate the start-up phase, the "Assessment of Assessments."

GMA-2 REPORT

Vladimir Golitsyn, Director, of the UN Division on Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), welcomed delegates to the second GMA International Workshop on Monday, 13 June 2005. Delegates adopted the agenda (A/AC.271/L.1) without amendments, and elected John Roberts, Head, Marine and Waterways, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK, as Chair.

Chair Roberts thanked participants for electing him to continue the work started at the first GMA International Workshop. He mentioned Iceland's verbal note indicating that it would not participate in the meeting due to its concern regarding the concerted efforts by other nations to widen the scope of the GMA to include an assessment of living marine resources (A/AC.271/1).

Nicolas Michel, UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel, provided an overview of the establishment of the GMA, and encouraged participants to bring new life to this endeavor by focusing on the "Assessment of Assessments."

Chair Roberts then invited delegates to exchange views on how to take the "Assessment of Assessments" forward, suggesting a focus on financing and the involvement of UN agencies and governments.

The Russian Federation highlighted the GMA's key objectives, emphasizing that it is a scientific process. The Republic of Korea said the GMA should strengthen global understanding of the state of the marine environment, stressing this does not include the management of marine living resources. Canada stated that the GMA can only contribute to the public debate if it is scientifically sound, transparent, and comprehensive. UNEP suggested taking stock of existing activities and of the added value of all relevant UN agencies. The US expressed its support for the GMA process and the "Assessment of Assessments," proposing a disclaimer that the latter has no regulatory function. He called for flexibility in defining the GMA's scope and favored a focus on ecosystems.

Chair Roberts then introduced the report of the first GMA International Workshop (A/59/126) and encouraged discussion on the establishment of a task force to carry out the "Assessment

of Assessments," which he described as a critical appraisal of existing assessments, to identify gaps and assess how well these assessments have been communicated to policy makers at the national, regional and global levels.

CONCLUSIONS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Pursuant to the mandate established by UNGA resolution 59/24, which calls on the second GMA International Workshop to create a task force to carry out the "Assessment of Assessments," delegates exchanged views on this issue on Monday through Wednesday in plenary and on Monday afternoon in an informal working group. Based on the discussions held on Monday, on Tuesday morning Chair Roberts circulated draft conclusions to be submitted to the General Assembly, and a revised draft of the conclusions was prepared on Tuesday afternoon. Delegates discussed the revised draft on Wednesday. The draft was divided into the following sections: Introduction; Features of the "Assessment of Assessments"; Aims of the "Assessment of Assessments"; Organizational arrangements; and Finance and resources.

INTRODUCTION: This section reiterates the need to initiate an "Assessment of Assessments" as an important step before any decisions are made concerning the establishment of the GMA. On Tuesday morning, the US noted that the decision to establish the GMA was taken at the WSSD, and that the chapeau should recognize the role of the "Assessment of Assessments" in determining how to establish the GMA, not whether it will be established. On Wednesday, India reopened this debate and suggested adding language implying that the "Assessment of Assessments" has to be carried out before deciding to establish the GMA. The US and the Netherlands disagreed, noting that the WSSD and the General Assembly had already agreed on the need to establish the GMA. Norway, supported by Sweden and Canada, suggested, as a compromise, using language from UNGA resolution 59/24 that calls for the establishment of the GMA. Delegates agreed to the Norwegian proposal.

Final Text: In the conclusions, the Workshop reiterates the need to initiate an "Assessment of Assessments" as called for in UNGA resolution 59/24.

FEATURES OF THE "ASSESSMENT OF ASSESSMENTS": From Monday through Wednesday, delegates discussed features of the "Assessment of Assessments," focusing on: the nature of the "Assessment of Assessments"; scientific aspects; socioeconomic aspects; and review of existing assessments.

Nature of the "Assessment of Assessments": On Monday in plenary, Chair Roberts proposed, and delegates agreed, to mention in the conclusions that the "Assessment of Assessments" will not alter the competence of any UN specialized agencies. Canada stressed the need for the outcome to be policy relevant and neutral. On Tuesday, Canada underlined the need to clarify that the assessment is not a policy exercise, adding that neither the "Assessment of Assessments" nor the GMA should prejudice or describe the policy debate. Brazil, opposed by India, suggested that the "Assessment of Assessments" should be "relevant" rather than "policy relevant." On Wednesday, Germany considered it "obvious" that the "Assessment of Assessments" should be relevant and proposed deletion of that



phrase. China, supported by Indonesia and Chile, called for a reference to the respect of coastal States' sovereign rights and jurisdiction in accordance with UNCLOS.

Scientific aspects: On Monday in plenary, the Republic of Korea, supported by Canada, stressed the importance of addressing overlaps within scientific data. The US suggested testing the scientific validity of both governmental and non-governmental assessments. India noted the existence of conflicting national, regional and global data, especially in territorial waters and the continental shelf, questioning how such conflict may be resolved. The FAO described the recent launch of a computer system allowing for real-time access to data compiled by regional fisheries commissions linked to the FAO. He underlined that the FAO assesses all fisheries resources but not habitats. Canada requested clarification on whether the scientists would set the parameters for gathering data.

On Tuesday, Mexico noted that the "Assessment of Assessments" includes both natural and social science. UNEP stated that it should provide guidance concerning the current state of knowledge, experts involved, databases and methodologies used.

Socioeconomic aspects: On Tuesday, India, supported by Iran, Argentina and the FAO, argued that the assessment should include socioeconomic aspects in order to be policy relevant. The US noted the need to define socioeconomic relevance. The FAO stressed that socioeconomic drivers have to be included in the assessment for the exercise to be useful, underlining that little socioeconomic data is available. Germany and the US noted that accounting for socioeconomic aspects is within the mandate of the GMA, as reflected in the JPOI, and the US argued that socioeconomic aspects should be addressed in a rigorous and analytical way. New Zealand said international trends, such as the globalization of fishing activities, should be taken into account, as they impact the marine environment. Ireland noted that human coastal activities, such as population growth, zoning laws, and tourism, impact the marine environment and should also be assessed. Norway suggested narrowing down the inclusion of socioeconomic aspects, calling for an assessment of the impacts of land-based pollution on the marine environment, and opposing recommendations on relevant land-based human activities. The Republic of Korea noted that the GMA process and the "Assessment of Assessments" involve not only a scientific, but also a socioeconomic analysis, deeming it premature to include policy options in the "Assessment of Assessments." FAO clarified that scientists would not elaborate policy options, but are deemed to analyze information embodying policy options.

On Wednesday, Norway proposed including economic aspects while addressing the state of the marine environment, and referring to activities affecting the marine environment, rather than maritime activities. Indonesia preferred referring to JPOI paragraph 36, rather than generically to the WSSD mandate. The US suggested that time, resources and professional judgment determine the range of activities that can be covered in the "Assessment of Assessments."

Review of existing assessments and phases of the "Assessment of Assessments": On Monday, in plenary, Canada favored a step-by-step approach and, with the US,

called for an agreed mandate including all steps. DOALOS described the need for an entity to assemble the information from governments, prior to creating the steering group where agencies and governments are represented. The FAO, supported by the US, outlined three phases for the assessment to have a strong independent scientific base, including scientists in their personal capacity, government experts, and a political body. The Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) recommended, and the US agreed, that in the initial stage the experts' group should be limited in size.

Final Text: In the conclusions, the Workshop agreed that the "Assessment of Assessments":

- is not intended to alter the competence of any other organization to undertake marine assessments within its field of competence;
- respects sovereign rights and jurisdiction of coastal States, according to UNCLOS;
- is not intended to make recommendations about the management of human activities that affect the ocean, as it will be for other competent authorities to draw any conclusions about the implications for management of activities within their fields of competence;
- should be essentially science-based, not require original scientific research to be undertaken or any new marine observations to be made, but will involve drawing together scientific and technical data;
- in accordance with the JPOI, should include socioeconomic aspects while addressing the state of the marine environment, including existing assessments of trends in employment in and economic value of activities affecting the marine environment. Time, resources and professional judgment will determine the range of activities that can be covered; and
- will need to acknowledge uncertainty, and identify gaps in scientific knowledge and data.

AIMS OF THE "ASSESSMENT OF ASSESSMENTS": This section outlines the aims of the "Assessment of Assessments," namely assembling information on and making a constructive appraisal of assessments, and establishing how the assessments have been communicated to policy makers. This section also outlines the outputs of the "Assessment of Assessments." Delegates discussed the aims of the "Assessment of Assessments" in plenary from Monday through Wednesday.

Assembling information about scientific assessments: On Tuesday, India expressed concern about including assessments carried out by NGOs in the "Assessment of Assessments," suggesting that only formal bodies, such as UN agencies, be eligible to contribute. Canada suggested that the experts' group decide which data is used, to avoid making the "Assessment of Assessments" a closed process. The US, supported by Australia and the Netherlands, deemed it unnecessary for national authorities to endorse NGOs' work to legitimize it, stressing quality of data, rather than source, is key. Australia pointed out the current text on gathering information from assessments carried out "under the purview" of UN agencies does not imply that all relevant data is accounted for, and he suggested retaining language on using assessments "where appropriate, by other organizations." The Netherlands underscored that scientific



information on the high seas is gathered by NGOs, and that all available data should be used. GESAMP acknowledged the failure of scientists to communicate data to policy makers as an obstacle to good governance. On Wednesday, India proposed, to address his concerns about inclusion of NGOs' assessments, to assemble information on assessments already carried out by "any other relevant organization, where appropriate."

Critical appraisal of existing assessments: On Monday, in plenary, Canada emphasized evaluating the objectivity of existing assessments and the effective communication of their results. France cautioned against conveying the impression that the task force is judging the quality of existing assessments, and the US proposed focusing on lessons learned. Serge Garcia, FAO, speaking in his personal capacity, suggested including the limitations of each assessment and allowing for participation of those that undertake the assessments appraised. Canada noted the need for further discussion on the criteria of the appraisal. On Wednesday, delegates agreed that the "Assessment of Assessments" should synthesize best practices in assessment methodologies.

Communication to policy makers: On Tuesday, Canada suggested further clarifying the use of "best practices" in relation to the "Assessment of Assessments" and establishing how assessments have been communicated to policy makers. On Wednesday, Norway opposed identification of best practices in effective engagement of policy makers, and Canada suggested that identification of best practices include how the product has been targeted at the policy, scientific and public audiences. India proposed, and delegates agreed, deleting text on the identification of best practices in communication.

Outputs: On Monday through Wednesday, delegates discussed the outputs of the "Assessment of Assessments" as identified in the Chair's draft, including: geographic scale and capacity building. On Wednesday afternoon, Canada convened an informal group that drafted new language on a report by the experts group to the steering group identifying assessments and their potential contribution to the GMA process.

On capacity building, on Monday in an informal session the FAO and Mexico said the assessment process will identify gaps in capacity, with Mexico stressing that the regional component will be important in this regard. GESAMP underlined that the "Assessment of Assessments" would help identify lessons learned and best practices, which could be used in building capacity. In support, the US added that the carrying out of the "Assessment of Assessments" by country representatives would in itself be a capacity-building exercise. On Wednesday, delegates agreed on language on the need for capacity building to support the regular GMA process.

On the geographic scale of the "Assessment of Assessments," on Monday in plenary, the European Commission (EC), the US and the Republic of Korea preferred a regional approach to the "Assessment of Assessments," with the EC favoring regional organizations working together to arrive at geographically limited conclusions to be applied at the global level. On Monday in an informal session, the FAO, noting that there are many large marine ecosystems, warned against using them as the basis of the assessment. China, supported by the US, argued that the question of the size of the assessed regions should be left to the experts

and not be addressed by the Workshop. France and Canada disagreed, noting that during the first international workshop, this question had been greatly debated. Mexico proposed the regions be selected on a geographically balanced basis.

On Wednesday, Canada suggested language for the outputs of the "Assessments of the Assessment," paragraph, asking the "Assessment of Assessments" for advice on costs options, instead of recommending specific solutions. China, supported by Indonesia, commented on "the appropriate level of geographical/ecological scale for building components for the regular process," and "what regional approaches might be used," saying these sections should be deleted, and underscoring that "ecological method" is not clearly defined. India opposed using the phrases "geographical scale," "ecological scale," and "regional approaches," noting that they are not defined. Canada clarified that the outputs of the "Assessment of Assessments" will be considered as suggestions for how to proceed with the regular GMA process. Argentina, supported by the US, reiterated China's concerns regarding the appropriate level of geographical scale, noting the word "appropriate" should be deleted. The Republic of Korea expressed doubts as to whether the "Assessment of Assessments" will provide advice to Member States or the General Assembly. The US reminded participants that the uncertainty on defining the geographical scale was discussed at the first GMA International Workshop, calling for a neutral way to reflect this uncertainty. Indonesia warned against prejudging the General Assembly's decision on the outputs of the "Assessment of Assessments." On regionalization, the FAO reiterated that the output should only provide suggestions, and noted the need for technical guidance to UN agencies and partners in the "Assessment of Assessments." On Wednesday afternoon, delegates considered new language drafted by an informal group convened by Canada. India, supported by China, requested deleting reference to "regional" assessment, and delegates agreed on language on how organizing assessment components at different scales could relate to integrated assessments.

On the next steps of the GMA process, on Tuesday, the US and Mexico proposed adding text calling for the "Assessment of Assessments" to make recommendations regarding the establishment and ensuing phases of the regular GMA process. On Tuesday evening, the revised Chair's draft contained language on the cost of the regular process. On Wednesday afternoon, delegates agreed on new language drafted by an informal group convened by Canada, on a framework and option to move forward on building the regular GMA process, including potential costs.

Final Text: In the conclusions, the Workshop agreed that, given the data and assessments that the experts group finds are relevant to a regular process, and based on their expert evaluations, the experts group would produce a report within 24 months to the Steering Group that could include identification of:

- assessments available on the marine environment, and an evaluation of their potential contribution to the regular process;
- data available, and how these might be incorporated into the regular process;



- the usefulness and constraints posed by organizing assessment components of the regular process at different scales;
- how organizing assessment components at different scales could relate to integrated assessments;
- existing gaps, and their implications for the regular process;
- the need for capacity building to support the regular process; and
- a framework and options to move forward on building the regular process, including potential costs.

ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS: Organizational arrangements were considered throughout the Workshop and delegates addressed issues pertaining to: the structure of the task force carrying forward the “Assessment of Assessments”; the composition and functions of the steering group and the experts group; and the designation of a lead agency. The draft Chair’s proposal of conclusions circulated on Tuesday did not refer to the establishment of a task force but suggests creating a time-limited steering group to oversee the preparation of the “Assessment of Assessments” and assembling a group of experts to carry out the assessment.

Composition of the steering group: In plenary on Monday, the Russian Federation called for equitable geographical representation of governments, while the US added that the representation should be flexible. The Netherlands suggested that international organizations as well as NGOs participate in the task force to carry out the “Assessment of Assessments,” while Argentina cautioned against such participation. The FAO stressed the need for participation of scientists. Norway and India asked for clarification on the involvement of scientists in the assessment process, in particular the process of their selection. Chair Roberts identified consensus on GESAMP participating in the task force.

Balance between the involvement of States and scientists: The US, the Russian Federation, the Netherlands, and Mexico agreed that the task force should have a scientific mandate. Mexico suggested the task force have an integrated bureau to ensure that States do not act unduly on the scientific information gathered. Norway pointed to the difficulty of building upon existing initiatives, and concurrently establishing a structure comprising independent scientists, nationally appointed experts and policy makers. Chair Roberts noted the need to balance transparent and independent scientific input and the steering by States.

In the informal session on Monday, France emphasized the role of the IOC in providing the task force with relevant scientific data. Argentina underlined the importance of developing countries’ participation, and noted that ambitions had to correspond to the available financial resources. The US called for a balance between scientists and policy experts, with Canada stressing that its products should be both policy relevant and neutral. The FAO suggested using a website for sharing information with governments.

On Tuesday, commenting on the Chair’s draft conclusions, India stressed that the steering group must include experts nominated by member States on an equitable geographical basis. Noting time constraints, UNEP encouraged that the composition of the steering group be limited to ensure it is operational. Norway, supported by New Zealand, the Republic

of Korea and Mexico, stressed the need to clarify differences between the steering group and the group of experts, and asked how to ensure regional organizations’ input in these two groups. New Zealand recommended the steering group be composed of member countries and regional management organizations. The Republic of Korea said the FAO, and not the regional fisheries organizations, should be on the steering group. Mexico stressed the need for bi-directional communication between the steering group and Member States. Canada, opposed by India, recommended that NGOs be represented on the steering group and underlined that the process be viewed as transparent by NGOs and IGOs. France requested clarification on the term of the steering group’s mandate, highlighting UNEP’s proposal for a two-year duration. India, China, Argentina, and Mexico stressed ensuring developing countries’ involvement. France recommended allowing for flexibility in the equitable geographic distribution. Indonesia proposed inclusion of multilateral environmental agreements in the steering group. Mexico said the steering group should be composed of States and the lead agency.

Group of experts: In plenary on Tuesday, commenting on the suggestion in the Chair’s draft that the lead agency assemble a group of experts, the US, Mexico, and the FAO suggested that the choice of experts be left to UN specialized agencies. France recommended that the experts’ group include both representatives chosen by Member States and UN agencies. India noted that if experts were drawn from outside the leading agencies’ roster, the process would be difficult to follow.

US proposal on new structure: On Tuesday afternoon, the US expressed concern about creating a task force too large and too costly to handle. To balance efficiency and transparency concerns, he suggested a limited steering group, with equitable geographical representation of members and UN agencies, responsible for agreeing on a work programme and a budget. To achieve accountability, he recommended organizing a midterm open-ended review, and proposed that the lead agency present a report at the review session. Mexico queried whether States would be the only participants in the steering group, and whether the lead agency or agencies would exclusively utilize their own experts. The US replied that cooperation of States with the lead agency in the steering group is acceptable. Canada and the FAO described the US proposal as streamlining the process, and highlighted its affordability and simplicity.

On Wednesday, the revised Chair’s draft suggested a tri-partite structure to carry forward the “Assessment of Assessments” including: a steering group; a lead agency; and a group of experts. Delegates then debated this proposed structure. Mexico and UNEP recommended a structure balancing efficiency, transparency and practicality that would produce quick results.

On creating a steering group, Brazil noted that the “Assessment of Assessments” only will compile existing information, and suggested that such a group is not necessary during this phase. Canada underlined the need for creating a steering group. The US agreed with both positions, as long as the midterm review was carried out. The Chair suggested, and delegates agreed, to create a steering group but reduce its functions. Brazil, supported by Canada, suggested that



UNICPOLOS review the work of the steering group, while Norway and China objected. Delegates did not agree on this proposal.

On the composition of the steering group, India called for the inclusion of an intergovernmental component in either the steering group or the experts' group.

Concern was raised on including exclusively lead UN agencies in the steering group, with Canada highlighting the need to embrace the institutional capital of other relevant organizations. Chair Roberts suggested, and delegates agreed, to refer to "all core UN organizations, agencies and programmes." Mexico called for clarifying the role of the lead agencies in the steering group and the experts' group, with Canada suggesting these agencies have two different functions in nominating scientists to the experts' group and providing advice as lead agencies.

Functions of the steering group: This paragraph describes the functions that will be carried out by the steering group. On Monday, in an informal session, Chair Roberts indicated that the General Assembly will commission and review the task force's work. To accelerate the process, Canada suggested the workshop consider performance criteria for the task force, and said the parameters for the "Assessment of Assessments" are key to guaranteeing scientific authenticity and policy relevance. The FAO suggested that GESAMP help formulate these parameters. UNEP called for taking note of the Group of Experts' report (A/AC.271/WP.1). This group was composed of States representatives, IGOs, NGOs, including both scientists and policy makers, and was established pursuant to GA resolution 58/240.

On Wednesday, delegates considered draft language submitted by the Chair on this issue. The US proposed deleting three subparagraphs describing that the group should ensure that: arrangements are in place to ensure the scientific validity of the process; the issues addressed are relevant to the concerns of the Member States and agencies responsible for managing marine activities; and linkages between relevant intergovernmental and non governmental organizations are made. He explained, and delegates agreed, that these functions could be taken up by the lead agency or the group of experts. Canada recommended, and delegates agreed, to add open language to allow for the group to "advise as requested." The US suggested that transparency and accountability concerns regarding the functioning of the group be taken care of by holding an open-ended midterm review. Canada agreed, noting that such a review would enable all States and NGOs to comment on the process. Mexico suggested specifying that the midterm review is to provide all UN Member States with the opportunity to comment on, and to contribute to the development of the ongoing work carried out on the process. New Zealand, supported by Canada, explained that the open-ended nature of the midterm review responds to the concern expressed by China, who stressed the importance of transparency and communication with States, in particular those not represented on the *ad hoc* steering group. France, supported by India, underlined that the draft leaves the composition and decision making of the steering group unresolved. Chair Roberts suggested, and all agreed, that the General Assembly should decide on these details.

Lead agency: This sub-section addresses the need to designate a UN agency to take the lead role in executing the "Assessment of Assessments" and to define its functions.

On Monday in plenary, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) underlined the need to specify the GMA's modalities vis-à-vis the GESAMP's mandate to avoid overlap. The IOC described his agency's involvement in the GMA process, highlighting its cooperation with UNEP in developing an inventory of existing assessments and the need for capacity building for the GMA. UNEP listed his agency's programmes that cover the environmental aspects of oceans and coasts, including the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) and the Regional Seas Programme. He underscored the need for capacity building in developing countries and the limited resources available to assess the marine and coastal environment. The US said IOC and UNEP should take the lead in the "Assessment of Assessments." Mexico stated that IOC should lead the task force. Norway recommended, and DOALOS agreed, that UN-Oceans should not coordinate the "Assessment of Assessments," since it is an administrative body that does not report back to an intergovernmental forum. Argentina proposed DOALOS be the lead agency.

In informal discussions on Monday, Canada stressed the need for one coordinating body, and noted the difficulty of combining the regional focus of the "Assessment of Assessments" and the horizontal structure of UN agencies. IOC reported that it had been instructed by its Assembly to follow up its collaboration with UNEP and lead the "Assessment of Assessments" process, stressing that finances have not been discussed. France recommended addressing budget issues before deciding if IOC would be the leading agency. The US cautioned against the General Assembly deciding on the designation of a lead agency, stating that it would delay major activities. Canada called for identifying an agency with social science skills, noting its importance in policy relevance and neutrality. The FAO highlighted that the lead agency's role would consist of implementing the work as well as providing data according to its own competence.

On Tuesday, the US, supported by Norway, suggested IOC and UNEP co-lead the "Assessment of Assessments," noting that financial resources could still be deposited in a single fund. Norway stressed FAO's involvement, given its expertise and participation in the FSA. Argentina and Canada preferred IOC as the lead agency. Japan supported IMO's involvement in the process, highlighting its expertise in pollution and dumping from shipping activities. IMO reiterated that it would contribute to the process by making any relevant information available, but could not be the lead agency due to lack of human and financial resources. The FAO suggested, and delegates agreed, adding the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to the list of lead UN agencies.

The IMO suggested adding a recommendation to account for GESAMP's scientific expertise. A number of delegates opposed, with France noting that no other organizations were specifically mentioned, and Indonesia pointing out that this was an intergovernmental workshop and only States were eligible to propose new text.



After an extensive debate on which organization should assume the lead role, delegates favored either UNEP or the IOC, or a joint venture between the two, stressing that the General Assembly would decide. UNEP and IOC endorsed a cooperative solution. The Chair suggested, and delegates agreed to, language recommending UNEP and IOC to jointly form the lead agency.

Final Text: In the conclusions, the Workshop envisages that the “Assessment of Assessments” might take two years and should be carried forward by: an *ad hoc* steering group; two lead agencies; and a group of experts. The Workshop recommends that the General Assembly establish an *ad hoc* steering group to oversee the execution of the “Assessment of Assessments.” The *ad hoc* steering group should include: nominees of Member States on an equitable geographical basis, and ensuring the adequate range of expertise; and the core organization, agencies and programmes of the UN system, and the ISA.

The workshop envisages that: the functions of the *ad hoc* steering group should be to: agree on a proposed staged programme and budget for the “Assessment of Assessments” and provide advice as requested; and there should be an open ended midterm review to provide all UN Member States with the opportunity to comment on, and to contribute to, the development of the ongoing work carried out on the “Assessment of Assessments.” The Workshop envisages that:

- a UN agency be appointed to take the lead role in executing the “Assessment of Assessments” and provide secretariat services to the steering group, under the latter’s guidance and in cooperation with the IOC, UNEP, FAO, IMO and WMO;
- the lead agency should establish a group of experts, in collaboration with the core UN agencies, to undertake the actual work of assessing the various assessments. The composition of the group should be approved by an *ad hoc* steering group; and
- the General Assembly should invite UNEP and UNESCO/IOC jointly to undertake this role.

FINANCE AND RESOURCES: This section deals with the finance and resources necessary for the “Assessment of Assessments.” Delegates discussed this in an informal session on Monday and in plenary on Tuesday and Wednesday.

During the informal session on Monday, Chair Roberts drew attention to the assessment work already carried out by UN agencies, noting that the “Assessment of Assessments” would imply incremental costs related to new activities, such as peer review or the functioning of a secretariat. The US read an e-mail received from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) indicating that it could contribute to funding the “Assessment of Assessments” if linked to existing GEF funding work. UNEP mentioned that co-financing with the GEF is in cash only, not in-kind. The IOC said his agency could contribute financially. Jamaica inquired if UN-Oceans could assist in raising funds for the task force.

On Tuesday, Canada inquired what activities would considerably raise the cost of the “Assessment of Assessments,” with the FAO, UNEP, IMO and IOC responding that new activities or criteria not included in existing programmes would require additional financial resources. Canada and Norway cautioned against recommending UN agencies amend their existing budgets, with Norway noting the Workshop should not

pre-empt the UN budgetary process. Canada highlighted the distinction between costs for the “Assessment of Assessments” and the regular GMA process.

On Wednesday, UNEP, IOC, FAO and IMO all indicated that their budgets had already been agreed and that they would not have the funds to finance any additional activities. Chair Roberts suggested, and delegates agreed, to delete language specifying that the lead agency would manage a budget for its work related to the execution of the Assessment. The FAO, supported by UNEP, expressed concern that lack of information on the need for additional funding would delay the assessment process, and suggested indicating expenditures to the General Assembly, such as the meetings of the steering group, mid-term review, groups of experts, peer review, and publications. Chair Roberts included this suggestion in the draft conclusions, noting the need for further negotiations on financial needs.

Final Text: In the conclusions, the second GMA International Workshop notes that UN organizations and agencies are already undertaking marine monitoring and assessment work, and could contribute their experience and results to the “Assessment of Assessments” process. The Workshop also recognizes that there will be some additional costs, such as the meetings of the steering group, mid-term review, groups of experts, peer review and publications, for which financial resources need to be found.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Wednesday, Chair Roberts said delegates had identified the way forward on the carrying out the “Assessment of Assessments” and had made some progress in accomplishing the WSSD commitment, although some issues remained unsolved. He explained that the Secretariat would incorporate all the amendments made during the day to his revised draft conclusions, which will be incorporated in the Secretary-General’s report to the General Assembly. He gavelled the meeting to a close at 5:26 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

57TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION:

This meeting will take place from 20-24 June 2005, in Ulsan, Republic of Korea. For more information, contact: IWC Secretariat; tel: +44-1223-233-971; fax: +44-1223-232-876; e-mail: secretariat@iwcoffice.org; internet: <http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/meeting2005.htm>

UNECE SEMINAR ON THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF WATER-RELATED ECOSYSTEMS: This seminar will be held from 27-28 June 2005, in Geneva, Switzerland. Organized by the Water Convention Secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), this seminar will address services and financing for the protection and sustainable use of water-related ecosystems. For more information, contact: Francesca Bernardini, UNECE; tel: +41-22-917-2463; fax: +41-22-917-0107; e-mail: francesca.bernardini@unece.org; internet: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/>

CBD WORKSHOP ON THE JOINT WORK PROGRAMME ON MARINE AND COASTAL INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES: This Convention on Biological Diversity workshop will be held from 27-29 June 2005, in Montreal, Canada, and is jointly hosted by Secretariat of the CBD, the



Global Invasive Species Programme, and the UNEP Regional Seas Programme. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <https://www.biodiv.org/>

CBD AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERTS GROUP ON MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY: This meeting will be held from 11-15 July 2005, in Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/>

COASTAL ZONE CONFERENCE 2005: This conference will take place from 18-21 July 2005, in New Orleans, US and will consider applicable tools, lessons learned, and innovative ideas to help address current coastal management issues. Aimed at coastal resource managers, this will be the 14th biennial coastal zone conference. For more information, contact: Rhonda Crawley, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; tel: +1-843-740-1231; e-mail: Rhonda.Crawley@noaa.gov; internet: <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cz/>

EUROPEAN MARINE BIOLOGY SYMPOSIUM: The 40th EMBS is scheduled to take place from 21-25 August 2005, in Vienna, Austria. Keynote speakers will introduce the two themes of the Symposium: Remote and inaccessible marine habitats and Advances in underwater observation and experimentation. For more information, contact: IECB - Institute for Ecology and Conservation Biology; tel: +43-1-4277 54 202; fax: +43-1-4277 54 339; e-mail: embs40@promare.at; internet: <http://www.promare.at/embs40/>

HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE 60TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT: The Summit will take place from 14-16 September 2005, at UN headquarters in New York. The meeting is expected to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made towards the commitments articulated in the UN Millennium Declaration. The event will also review progress made in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes and commitments of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. For more information on the internet, go to: http://www.un.org/ga/59/hl60_plenarymeeting.html

FIRST INTERNATIONAL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS CONGRESS: This international congress will be held from 23-27 October 2005, in Geelong, Australia. The congress aims to address the World Commission on Protected Areas' Marine goal and primary themes, and advance discussion on their widespread adoption and implementation consistent with resolutions relevant to marine protected areas arising from the Durban World Parks Congress. For more information, contact: Congress Organizers; tel: +61-3-5983-2400; fax: +61-3-5983-2223; e-mail: sm@asnevents.net.au; internet: <http://www.impacongress.org/>

SECOND CONFERENCE ON WATER RESOURCES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN: This conference will take place from 14-17 November 2005, in Marrakesh, Morocco. This conference will cover topics such as: integrated water resources management and water use efficiency; global change and anthropogenic perturbations: effects on water resources;

Mediterranean aquatic systems functioning; urban and domestic wastewaters; health-related water pollution; and environmental policy, regulation and implementation. For more information, contact: Lahcen Hassani, University Cadi Ayyad (Marrakesh) and University Hassan I (Settat); tel: +212-4443-4649 (ext. 517); fax: +212-4443-7412; e-mail: watmed2@ucam.ac.ma; internet: <http://www.ucam.ac.ma/fssm/watmed2/>

THIRD INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON DEEP-SEA CORALS: This symposium will be held from 28 November - 2 December 2005, in Miami, US. Bringing together scientists, marine resource managers, policy makers, and students, this meeting aims to exchange scientific knowledge of deep-sea corals and associated fauna. For more information, contact: Robert Brock, NOAA; tel: +1-301-713-2367, ext. 162; fax: +1-301-713-1875; e-mail: Robert.Brock@noaa.gov; internet: <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/coral/>

SECOND MEETING OF THE CBD WORKING GROUP ON PROTECTED AREAS: The second meeting of the CBD Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas will be held from 5-9 December 2005, in Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/>

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN LAKES, LAGOONS AND WETLANDS OF THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION: This conference, which will take place from 4-7 January 2006, in Cairo, Egypt, will take up: current status and environmental issues; field monitoring and environmental assessment; hydrology and climate; remote sensing and GIS techniques; modeling hydro-ecological dynamics; water management; and managing water resources for people and for biodiversity. For more information, contact: Dr. Roger Flower and Caroline Chambers, Environmental Change Research Centre; tel: +44 (0) 207 679 5545 / 4279; fax: +44 207 (0) 679 4293; info.ecollaw2006@geog.ucl.ac.uk; internet: <http://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/melmarina/ecollaw2006/>

THIRD GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON OCEANS, COASTS AND ISLANDS: The third Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands will take place from 23-27 January 2006, in Paris, France. The Forum serves as a platform for cross-sectoral information sharing and dialogue on issues affecting oceans, coasts and islands, with the goal of achieving sustainable development in these areas. For more information, contact: Secretariat; tel: +1-302-831-8086; fax: +1-302-831-3668; e-mail: johnston@udel.edu; internet: <http://www.globaloceans.org/>

SECOND INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES: The second Intergovernmental Review (IGR-2) of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) will take place from 16-20 October 2006 in Beijing, China. For more information, contact the GPA Coordination Office, UNEP; tel: +31 (0)70 311 4460; fax: +31 (0)70 345 6648; e-mail: gpa@unep.nl; internet: <http://www.gpa.unep.org/>