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Summary of the Third Sustainable Oceans Initiative Global Dialogue: 25-28 October 2022

A healthy Ocean and coastal ecosystems are vitally important for humans and the environment. The Ocean regulates the climate, absorbs much of the carbon dioxide emitted by human activity, and provides fish and shellfish, the main source of protein to over three billion people. The biological diversity of the Ocean and coastal regions provides important services, including food security, livestock feed, raw materials for medicines, building materials from coral rock and sand, and natural defenses against coastal erosion and flooding. These ecosystem goods and services provided by the Ocean amount to an estimated USD 12 trillion. However, human activities put pressure on coastal and marine ecosystems, including through climate change, overfishing, and pollution. A large percentage of the world’s fisheries are overexploited. Eight million tons of plastic enter the Ocean each year and contaminate a quarter of all seafood. Eighty percent of wastewater is discharged without treatment, damaging human health and biodiversity.

Given this reality, actions to respond in a coherent manner are critical, and this is what the third Sustainable Oceans Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue focused on under the theme of “Forging a new era of regional leadership in the post-2020 world.” The meeting brought together representatives of regional seas organizations (RSOs), regional fishery bodies (RFBs), and relevant UN and international organizations and initiatives as well as experts from national governments and agencies, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Participants convened in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 25-28 October 2022, in person for the first time since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, to consider updates on activities to advance cooperation at the regional scale since the second meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue in 2018. Participants were challenged in a breakout session to provide feedback on areas of relevance to regional coordination and cooperation, including other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM), marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) and addressing marine litter. The latter two thematic areas are currently being negotiated and it was therefore important for regional organizations to consider their potential approach to incorporating these into their own work plans.



Participants pose together with a typical Korean “fighting” hand gesture.

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Another breakout session considered the linkages and relevance of regional work and collaboration pertaining to the goals and targets for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF). These considerations were followed by regions developing or revising concrete actions and milestones towards roadmaps for implementing the post-2020 GBF. These inputs were captured in the Busan Outcome.

The meeting was co-chaired by Dixon Waruinge, Nairobi Convention Secretariat Coordinator, and Stefán Ásmundsson, Government of Iceland and former Executive Secretary, North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). It was hosted by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea, and the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea, with additional funding support provided by the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund) and the Government of France (through the French Biodiversity Agency). Before closing the meeting, the Secretariat distributed a draft summary of the meeting report, the “Busan Outcome,” and invited participants to provide feedback after the meeting.

A Brief History of the SOI Global Dialogues

During the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2010, delegates adopted a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and a set of biodiversity targets known as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The SOI, which arose out of this meeting, emphasized the need for training and capacity building of developing country Parties to address the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. The CBD Secretariat responded to this need and, with the support of the Governments of Japan and France and other partners, established the SOI as a global platform to build partnerships and facilitate dialogue to address capacity needs in support of countries’ efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Specific actions under the SOI have included: bringing together different sectors to share experiences; facilitating regional capacity-building workshops to outline opportunities and pathways to improve coordination between fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in different regions; and hosting national workshops to address specific governance and technical challenges of individual countries. The SOI Global Dialogues are a vehicle to bring together RSOs and RFBs.

The SOI concept was further developed in subsequent meetings, including the 2011 SOI Programme Development Meeting in Kanazawa, Japan, and the 2012 SOI High-level Meeting in Yeosu, Republic of Korea.

First SOI Global Dialogue: Convened in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in September 2016, the aim of this meeting was to support the role of RSOs and RFBs in accelerating achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The key outcome from this meeting, the Seoul Outcome:

- acknowledged the diversity of experiences, challenges, priorities, and capacities among countries and regional organizations;

- emphasized the need for capacity-building activities in support of cooperation at the regional level;
- underlined the importance of national-level coordination in facilitating regional-level, cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination;
- affirmed the critical role played by regional organizations in supporting and facilitating actions by national governments; and
- emphasized the need to continue the Global Dialogues.

During subsequent **intersessional meetings**, an Informal Working Group for the SOI Global Dialogue met in Seoul in June 2017, to: review progress made in facilitating regional cross-sectoral collaboration to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the SDGs; review the outcome of the 2017 Ocean Conference in relation to the future role of the SOI Global Dialogue; identify potential substantive elements of the programme of future Global Dialogues; and consider possible ways to maintain intersessional communication.

Second SOI Global Dialogue: Convened in Seoul from 10-13 April 2018 under the theme, “Unlocking the potential for transformational change towards sustainability,” this meeting produced the “Seoul Outcomes Plus+2.” At the meeting, participants, *inter alia*:

- identified existing complementary capacities, resources, and activities to enhance regional cooperation and coordination and support national-level implementation;
- encouraged RSOs and RFBs to consider creating or further developing regional cross-sectoral dialogues to identify areas and modalities of cooperation and collaboration;
- identified resources available for organizations and regions most in need of support, such as through capacity development and institutional strengthening;
- welcomed the roadmaps developed during the meeting, which identified possible ways and means to put the Seoul Outcome+2 into concrete practice and enhance cross-sectoral collaboration at the regional scale; and
- discussed potential intersessional activities, with a focus on enhancing the role of regional organizations and bodies in supporting national reporting on global goals.



Myeong-dal Song, Deputy Minister of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea



Wan-hyun Choi, President, MABIK

While the third meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue was scheduled to convene in 2020, it was postponed to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The CBD Secretariat thus convened a **Virtual Intersessional Workshop** for the SOI Global Dialogue with RSOs and RFBs from 29 September to 1 October 2021, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and with financial support from the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea. The meeting focused in particular on: sharing views and experiences on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on regional collaboration; identifying lessons learned to enhance collaboration under these circumstances; and the role of, and opportunities for, regional organizations and regional collaboration in the post-2020 GBF, being negotiated under the CBD.

Report of the Third SOI Global Dialogue

On Tuesday morning, 25 October, Myeong-dal Song, Deputy Minister of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea, opening the meeting, said marine biodiversity is essential to economic and social prosperity but is endangered by overfishing and climate change, among others. He highlighted key takeaways from the second SOI Global Dialogue, such as the need for ecosystem-based management, and called for further exploration of practical action plans.

Joe Appiott, Coordinator for Marine, Coastal and Island Biodiversity, CBD Secretariat, said the post-2020 GBF is steeped in a whole-of-society approach. He called for an improved understanding of how the Ocean is understood and used by different stakeholders, and of how regional governance can help reach global goals for a sustainable Ocean.

Noting the Ocean is a “treasure chest” of essential resources now facing severe risk of loss, Wan-hyun Choi, President, National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea (MABIK), underscored SOI as a model for integrated governance and cooperation. He referred to the meeting’s theme of “Forging a new era of regional leadership in the post-2020 world,” stressing the need to promote comprehensive research and strengthen the role of regional organizations in preparation for CBD COP 15 and the post-2020 GBF.

Dixon Waruinge, Coordinator, Nairobi Convention Secretariat, UNEP, drew attention to the timing of the meeting, coinciding with critical discussions at the global level on Ocean governance in BBNJ and on marine litter and plastic pollution. He underscored UNEP’s work on the Regional Seas Programme, including supporting negotiations on a global agreement on marine litter and plastic pollution through science-based knowledge. He urged all to take advantage of governmental representation at the SOI Global Dialogue to strengthen partnerships.

Piero Mannini, Senior Liaison Officer and Secretary, Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network, Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, FAO, said an estimated 600 million people depend on fisheries and aquaculture in some way for their livelihoods, and underlined FAO’s commitment to support cross-sectoral cooperation to improve marine biodiversity.

Meeting Background, Objectives, and Expected Outputs and Outcomes

Appiott introduced the meeting objectives and expected outcomes, underscoring the SOI as a global platform for capacity building and regional organizations as key players in efforts to meet global goals. He emphasized: SOI’s focus on practical, actionable, and achievable steps; tailoring approaches to different regions; and “softening silos” while taking advantage of complementary capacities. As a meeting overview, Appiott stressed the informal nature of the discussions, which would potentially lead to revised, updated, or new regional roadmaps, and called on all participants to make use of the in-person meeting to build interpersonal connections.

Global Context: In a set of thematic presentations on “Evolving a global Oceans policy-scape for the Ocean,” Appiott said that, in contrast to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the post-2020 GBF should include a “portfolio of actions” to address the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss. Outcomes of this meeting, he noted, could feed into the upcoming CBD COP15 negotiations, and inform both implementation of the post-2020 GBF and updating of CBD’s programme of work and indicators.

Nancy Soi, UNEP, described the findings of a 2021 review on the state of “formalized cooperation” between RSOs and other intergovernmental organizations. She highlighted that 21 of the



Piero Mannini, FAO



Ulrika Gunnartz, Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission Secretariat

32 legal agreements that exist were established in the last decade, adding that the most common goal for cooperation was enhancing monitoring and data sharing. Ensuring the application of an ecosystem approach, she continued, was instead perceived to be the most challenging area in improving collaboration.

As one of the ways to support over 50 RFBs, Mannini described the establishment of the RFB Secretariat's Network in 1999, saying that although it is not a formal entity, it has become a unique tool for regional and global cooperation, as well as a mechanism to ensure technical coordination among RFBs. He further highlighted a successful regional consultation of the Western Indian Ocean region in Mozambique in April 2022, in which a new monitoring, control, and surveillance policy and strategy and a new National Plan of Action to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in Mozambique were presented and discussed. He noted this as a first initiative towards developing a regional cooperation framework aimed at: developing tools for improved information sharing and cooperation to ensure sustainable fisheries in the Western Indian Ocean; sharing and discussing results with other regions; and advancing concrete initiatives towards coordination and cooperation.

José Dallo, International Seabed Authority, explained the “green dilemmas” his organization faces, such as those posed by proposals to mine the Ocean bed to meet the expected increase in mineral demand. Lessons learned in devising Regional Environmental Management Plans (REMPs), he noted, included drawing on the experiences of other organizations, envisioning REMPs as long-term plans, addressing data gaps, and increasing investment in research and monitoring.

During the ensuing discussion, a concern was raised about the lack of progress made to improve the lives of fishermen, to which both co-chairs reminded participants of concrete progress and transformation reported, among others, by UNEP and FAO.

Progress Report of Activities Undertaken Since the Second Global Dialogue Meeting

Marketa Zackova, CBD Secretariat, presented the results of a survey on regional collaboration and coordination between RFBs and RSOs and the supporting role of the SOI Global Dialogue, emphasizing strong alignment amongst regional organizations, regular communication and dialogue, improved networking, and



Aomar Bourhim, La Conférence Ministérielle Sur la Coopération Halieutique entre les Etats Africains Riverains de l'Océan Atlantique

progress on implementation of regional roadmaps. Challenges and gaps identified in the survey included a lack of financial and human resources, duplication of efforts, and insufficient data. Going forward, she highlighted, *inter alia*, the need for a platform for regular data-sharing and knowledge exchange, increased financial and human resources, training, and scientific and technical guidance.

Regional Updates on Cross-Sectoral Cooperation at the Regional Scale and Inputs to Relevant Global Processes:

During this session on Tuesday, various regional organizations were specifically tasked to collaborate on a presentation and deliver one presentation on behalf of others in their region. Ulrika Gunnartz, Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC), gave an overview of cross-sectoral collaboration in the Western Indian Ocean Region. She noted, among others, collaboration efforts by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission in the areas of the Port State Measures Agreement on IUU fishing and information exchange, and lessons learned from the SWIOFC-Nairobi Convention Partnership Project, which seeks to improve marine and coastal governance and fisheries management, on how to collaborate effectively at the regional level.

Patrick Debels, Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+), spoke about the CLME+ Strategic Action Programme, a 10-year programme for the sustainable management of shared living marine resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems covering more than 20 countries and multiple overseas territories. He identified differing mandates, geographical scopes, and competition as challenges, and noted opportunities including improved cooperation with the maritime sector and integrated responses.

Peter Davies, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, reported on, among others, activities to reduce marine pollution, such as addressing waste management, pollution, and marine litter through existing and developing new agreements, such as the Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan. He emphasized the importance of the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan to arrest deterioration in the most endangered ecosystems worldwide, including through coordinated education and



Nicola Ferri, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

awareness rising, capacity building, and improving coastal fisheries management.

From the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS), Zuleika Pinzón Mendoza provided examples of regional collaboration among Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), saying the CPPS focuses on cross-sectoral collaboration with academia and other regional organizations, including through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Inter-American Convention for the Conservation of Sea Turtles to protect, conserve, and recover sea turtle populations and their habitats based on the best available data.

Speaking for the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, Jean-François Pulvenis noted that the Commission is one of a few organizations to holistically consider species and ecosystem conservation across its entire geography, from the high seas to the coastline, thus focusing not only on tuna conservation but on all species linked to tuna.

Aomar Bourhim, La Conférence Ministérielle Sur la Coopération Halieutique entre les Etats Africains Riverains de l'Océan Atlantique, provided an update on the West African region. He noted positive synergies in the areas of marine spatial planning and the identification of ecologically-significant areas, but warned that the “fragmented evolution” of RFBs, including under the Benguela Current Commission and the Abidjan Convention, sometimes leads to overlaps and misunderstandings of respective roles and mandates.

Nicola Ferri, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, and Anis Zarrouk, Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre, Barcelona Convention, spoke on cross-sectoral cooperation in the Mediterranean region, underscoring bottom-up approaches, shared visions, and data collection. They highlighted joint initiatives, including a regional repository of national legislation relating to fisheries and aquaculture throughout the Mediterranean, an open-source repository built on a Wiki engine, and the MedBycatch project to assess bycatch.

Liu Ning, Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), presented on collaboration in the North Pacific Region, particularly among the North Pacific Marine Science Organization, the North Pacific Fisheries Commission, and NOWPAP. He emphasized, *inter alia*, work on: assessment of



Sinikinesh Beyene Jimma, UNEP

marine and coastal environments; prevention and reduction of land and sea-based pollution; evaluation, reduction, and mitigation of the cost of harmful algal blooms; and strengthening the science-policy dialogue.

With respect to the Indo-Pacific region, Krishnan Paulpandian, Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organization, said the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project served as a driver for regional collaboration, and that a key area of focus included further academic collaboration between universities across the region. A representative of partner organizations, including the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia, then highlighted opportunities for improved collaboration, such as in the areas of pollution and marine litter and evidence-based fisheries management.

Ahmed Al-Mazrouai, Regional Commission for Fisheries, reported on the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment MoU, which developed in 2013 when regional organizations recognized that the increase in climate change and red tide impacts called for strengthening collaboration efforts. As main challenges to the region’s marine areas, he cited physical alterations that reduce habitats, climate change that may affect physio-chemical environments, excessive harvesting, including target species or their bycatch, and pollution that deteriorates the quality of ecosystems.

Dominic Pattinson, Executive Secretary, Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR), speaking on behalf of partner organizations, described multiple collaborations and highlighted the advisory role of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea in providing scientific evidence to all. Drawing on lessons learned from OSPAR’s collaboration with the NEAFC, he noted that establishing trust takes time and effort and that face-to-face, continuous, and frank communication is required.

During the ensuing discussion, participants addressed sustainable project funding and the limited life expectancy of some of the initiatives, with panelists stressing the need for further work to demonstrate added value, cost-effectiveness, and cost-efficiencies. Participants also took up challenges to the decision-making process and the growing influence of non-state actors with power and money; and the inclusion of sectors such as renewable energy, given its great impact on the Ocean.



Despina Symons-Pirovolidou, Fisheries Expert Group of the IUCN's Commission of Ecosystem Management

Through virtual online participation, Irina Makarenko, Black Sea Commission, pointed to various initiatives of the Commission, including with UNEP on marine litter, and another with the World Bank on “Bluing the Black Sea.”

Global Institutions Supporting Regional Collaboration and Governance: Sinikinesh Beyene Jimma, UNEP, said UNEP coordinates and contributes to the Regional Seas Programme with technical expertise and the delivery of new thinking and science-based policy, as well as, more specifically: the creation of integrated “source-to-sea” approaches; the development and update of Marine Spatial Plans; and the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs). She added that Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans are key instruments in the implementation of UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions.

Lorenzo Paolo Galbiati, FAO, elaborated on the opportunities provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) under its International Waters focal area and new transversal integrated programmes, highlighting the advantages related to secured funding and well-defined priorities, and links with SOI given it is built on a solid governance framework.

In further discussions, the audience referenced the GEF funding mechanisms, including how indicators are defined and the large gap between funds available and funds needed, with one participant reminding that well over USD 700 billion—the amount of the latest GEF replenishment—is needed for the Ocean agenda. On the latter, panelists responded that GEF funds should be combined with other funding streams.

Developments in Key Thematic Issue—Areas of Relevance to Regional Coordination and Cooperation: On Wednesday morning, 26 October, Despina Symons-Pirovolidou, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Fisheries Expert Group, sketched the history of OECMs, which, she noted, were not clearly defined until CBD COP 14 in 2018. She suggested these represent an opportunity to, *inter alia*, enhance existing cooperation between different international governance

mechanisms, and improve conservation outcomes of existing and new fisheries in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

David Johnson, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI), presenting the work of his student, Christine Gaebel, at the University of Edinburgh on developments and opportunities in the context of a future BBNJ regime. Johnson explained the BBNJ's fit in the complex tapestry of Ocean governance and highlighted aspects of the draft BBNJ discussions, including regarding “the duty to not undermine” existing frameworks, instruments and bodies, and the challenges of reaching an agreement on marine genetic resources. Johnson underscored that RSOs and RFBs have an important role to play in the implementation of the new regime, noting that around 60% of the Ocean is beyond national jurisdiction and can only be managed by international organizations.

In ensuing discussions, participants commented on the paradigm shift whereby fisheries and conservation are no longer fully separated, with OECMs providing a perfect example. They also noted the many ways RSOs and RFBs can inform deliberations, particularly by providing the context of real practice and implications of decisions.

Presenting on the new global plastic treaty, Soi reported on UNEA's resolution to work on an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, and to this end, a decision to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) and an *ad hoc* open-ended working group to discuss the timetable and organization of work of the INC.

On the science behind plastic pollution, she noted, among others, that plastic pollution: has increased massively; is lethal for many species; and alters global carbon cycling. She added that it is the resource-inefficient, linear, take-make-waste plastic economy that drives the crisis. Noting that millions of workers from informal settings ensure some level of waste collection and recycling, she called for a full lifecycle approach to addressing plastic pollution through developing a comprehensive instrument that addresses compliance, promotes national action plans, and includes research and innovation.

Participants then shared RSO and RFB perspectives in breakout groups on the thematic areas of:



David Johnson, GOBI

- new opportunities for RSO and RFB collaboration towards achieving global goals through OECMs;
- the future BBNJ treaty; and
- the development of a global plastic pollution treaty.

The breakout discussions unpacked each of these thematic areas regarding: alignment with mandates, strategies and areas of work; means and opportunities to scale up work on this issue; enabling factors and capacities needed; and key challenges and questions.

Regarding reflections on **OECMs**, participants highlighted:

- the importance of developing this initiative as it aligns closely with the mandate and strategy of marine conservation efforts;
- the usefulness of having internal dialogues among RSOs and RFBs to then proceed to implement joint projects;
- that some regions have not engaged extensively on the theme and recognize the need for coordination and collaboration;
- a list of criteria developed by some to distinguish between MPAs and OECMs, while others adopted measures to determine OECMs at the regional level;
- that OECMs can be an opportunity to have a more effective and sound dialogue between resource users, such as RFBs, and conservation managers, such as RSOs;
- the challenge posed by the fact that the agenda is often set by donors and not by local stakeholders; and
- the need to find an inclusive approach defining OECMs when it comes to all stakeholders, including RSOs and RFBs.

With respect to **BBNJ**, participants mentioned:

- the need to develop technical tools and management options and obtain guidance from the COP;
- the role of the CBD Secretariat to help streamline activities;
- in-country approaches to marine conservation and fisheries reside in different departments and non-communication between these hampers understanding of BBNJ and MPA distinctions;
- BBNJ provide an opportunity for RFBs to review and update their mandate to be consistent with the BBNJ treaty;
- the issue is politically sensitive in some regions; and
- the importance of ensuring Ocean governance does not become siloed among the many organizations and treaties, while the resources require connectedness.

Regarding addressing **marine litter and plastic pollution**, participants mentioned, among other issues:

- that countries collect and share national initiatives and measure the impact and scale of marine litter and plastic pollution, particularly pertaining to fishing gear, polystyrene cooler boxes, and accidental abandonment;
- the need to consider compensation or incentives for the return or collection of plastic pollutants;
- that prevention at the source is key, as it is “too late” once the plastic is in the Ocean;
- that fisheries are both one of the contributors to the release of plastic in the environment through fishing gear, for example, as well as highly impacted by microplastics, which affects the quality of their product;

- the need for scientific and technological advances in improved and unbreakable fishing gear and for cooperation to retrieve lost gear;
- the importance of more scientific-based knowledge on impacts; and
- awareness raising.

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and Roles of, and Opportunities for, Regional Coordination and Cooperation

Post-2020 Goals—Translating Global Goals to the Regional Level: In a video presentation, Basile van Havre and Francis Ogwal, Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 GBF, elaborated on the process of negotiating the draft GBF. Among remaining contentious issues, he pointed to digital sequence information on genetic resources. He also underlined that the entire GBF is relevant to the Ocean and raised the question of whether a “companion document” that provides an Ocean perspective on the whole GBF was needed.

Participants then convened in breakout groups non-specific to regions to consider questions on how the post-2020 GBF goals fit into existing regional goals, strategies and mandates of RSOs and RFBs, and to identify common elements.

Feedback from the breakout discussions to the larger group included:

- the importance of addressing tensions between artisanal and industrial fishing through close collaboration between RFBs and RSOs;
- the need to engage other sectors through the convening power of regional organizations, in particular with regards to marine spatial planning;
- the importance of reporting on what is being done by fisheries, as well as on capacity building facilitated at the regional level;
- that financing mechanisms motivate compliance to goals and that Protocols help with setting targets; and
- that RSOs and RFBs prioritize goals differently.

Post-2020 Targets—Supporting Implementation on the Ground: Maria Adelaide Ferreira, GOBI, gave an overview of the relevance of the key post-2020 GBF targets for regional cooperation on biodiversity and fisheries. She noted that the



Maria Adelaide Ferreira, GOBI



Joseph Appiott, CBD Secretariat

GBF currently lists 22 action-oriented targets along three axes, all of which relate to the work of regional organizations: reducing threats to biodiversity; meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing; and tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming. Regional organizations play a critical role, she added, in building the capacity of national stakeholders, and it is critical for them to explicitly articulate how their work will contribute to global targets.

Another breakout session followed with participants focusing on how these post-2020 targets align with existing regional efforts of RSOs and RFBs, and how they present opportunities to strengthen regional coordination and collaboration.

The meeting reconvened on Thursday morning with regional groups providing feedback on their deliberations from the previous day's breakout sessions. Participants highlighted: the importance of disaggregating data on global goals at the regional level; blue carbon approaches linking the biodiversity and climate change regimes; the need for data and capacity building; coordination challenges; adaptation to climate change and its impacts on area-based management and local communities; and involving the private sector.

Opportunities for collaboration identified included those relating to: ecosystem restoration; possibly drawing on guidelines produced in the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration; harmonization of measures and standards; shared databases and clearinghouse mechanisms; guidance on marine spatial planning; control and surveillance to ensure compliance; work related to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); sustainable tourism; use of low-impact gear; engaging sub-regional and other organizations; bringing together environment and fisheries ministries; reporting obligations; measuring biodiversity and stock assessment; invasive alien and "climate refugee" species; improving understanding of the impacts of aquaculture, including social indicators; and capacity building and technology transfer.

In an ensuing discussion, participants pointed to other regional players that could be included in governance mechanisms and noted that post-2020 revisions to the CBD's Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Programme of Work should better recognize the role of regional processes.

Identification of Opportunities for Concrete Implementation and Follow-Up: Developing or Revising Regional Roadmaps

On Thursday morning, Appiott introduced the task of developing or revising roadmaps for regional coordination and cooperation, which participants would develop within their respective regional groups during the remainder of the day. These regions were determined as follows: Western Indian Ocean, North Atlantic, Baltic and the Mediterranean, Wider Caribbean, Pacific Oceans Basin, African Atlantic, and the South and South-Eastern Asia.

Summarizing elements of roadmaps captured during the previous SOI Global Dialogue, Appiott highlighted having a common long-term vision, major milestones, issues of common interest, key actors, and possible collaborative activities and modalities to involve stakeholders from the region. He emphasized the need to capture short-term priority actions that will advance progress towards jointly identified long-term milestones. He underlined lessons learned in regional cooperation and coordination, including that: there are no one-size-fits-all solutions and approaches as regions vary according to political, economic, social, and environmental characteristics; building trust and mutual understanding is a long-term but essential process; and efforts to harmonize information and scientific advice across the region can help address the challenges posed by limited financial and human resources.

In a *tour de table* in the afternoon, participants reported progress on their revisions of previous roadmaps, noting the need to comprehensively identify relevant bodies and mandates in each region and establish greater mechanisms for coordination. Areas of common interest and related opportunities for collaboration varied according to regional characteristics and challenges, ranging from OECMs to ecosystem-based management, ecosystem restoration, and ocean acidification. Most noted ongoing discussions on regional involvement with global frameworks such as the BBNJ and the post-2020 GBF.

Friday morning began with regional breakout groups reporting back on their roadmap revisions. The group for the **Western Indian Ocean** reported on a roadmap on a common vision of "regional cooperation toward a healthy, productive, and resilient Ocean for the well-being of all," noting major milestones should include a comprehensive identification of relevant bodies in the region and enhancing their joint framework for collaboration.



View of the room during the regional group breakout discussions

Possible activities mentioned comprised information exchange and coordination, collaboration on resource mobilization, and the joint development of integrated assessments, guidelines, and tools for policy implementation. To do so, the group suggested they could create joint taskforces or digital platforms for information sharing.

The **North Atlantic, Baltic and the Mediterranean** group agreed major milestones should focus on an ecosystem-based approach for both marine ecosystems and fisheries resource conservation and sustainable use, with the precautionary principle highly recommended. Other milestones identified included: reinforcing communication and collaboration between RSOs and RFBs, with the CBD and SOI promoting results; improving communication between the CBD and RSOs; furthering the involvement of national states through RSOs; and advancing harmonization between the fisheries and the marine sectors. The three main thematic issues highlighted to focus on were OECMs, ecosystem-based management, and bycatch, while key follow-up activities included reinforcing existing MoUs, regional dialogues, capacity-building activities, and online platforms for sharing experiences.

The regional group for the **Wider Caribbean** said their common vision of a “healthy marine environment that supports the well-being and the livelihoods of the people of the region” should be supported by, *inter alia*:

- targeting common areas of focus, such as sargassum proliferation, ocean acidification, invasive species, and disaster risk reduction;
- addressing root causes of weak governance by strengthening institutional cooperation and improving financing and technical capacity; and
- operationalizing the Ocean Coordination Mechanism in the region, and, through this tool, adopting a common “Blueprint for the regional data and information landscape.”

The **Pacific Oceans Basins** regional group focused on cross-basin opportunities for dialogue, noting the need for filling institutional gaps, and for sharing resource mobilization given the existence of both developed and developing countries in the region. They underlined the importance of improving collaboration, including with NGOs and the private sector. Key thematic areas of work centered on marine pollution, particularly lost and discarded fishing gear, and monitoring and forecasting as part of climate change adaptation. Milestones identified included a regional coordination meeting in early 2024. For the next three years, the group will work on political awareness, scientific and traditional knowledge sharing, donor funding collaboration, and cooperation on the future plastics treaty.

The regional group for the **African Atlantic** proposed specific changes to the roadmap developed at the second SOI dialogue, noting, among others, the need to:

- develop a shared understanding of, and later collaborate to implement, the post-2020 GBF;
- increase the coordination of scientific information through, for example, the twinning of research institutes; and
- working together with a broad range of actors in areas of shared interest such as marine spatial planning and Ocean literacy.



Masumur Rahman, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme

The **South and South-East Asia** group’s major milestones included: mainstreaming GBF targets in work plans; formulating regional action plans on marine litter and plastics by 2025; and enhancing capacity building and knowledge sharing. Among the areas that the group plans to focus on is conserving aquatic habitats and biodiversity, combating marine pollution, and IUU. They suggested doing so through modalities such as preparing coastal and marine spatial plans and MPAs, data-sharing platforms, a joint webinar series by 2025, development of joint project proposals for resource mobilization, and holding an annual regional online meeting between RSOs and RFBs.

Enhancing the Impact of the SOI Global Dialogue with RSOs and RFBs

Darius Campbell, Secretary, NEAFC, moderated a discussion on how the SOI Global Dialogue could further support RSOs and RFBs. He first presented surveys taken by participants during the week which identified, among others, the lack of financial resources and work overload as the two most common challenges in regional cooperation.

On next steps for the SOI Global Dialogue in the context of the evolving global and regional landscape, participants noted, among others, strategies to show countries the benefits of engaging in the process, and the need to act as ambassadors for the process in their respective regions and organizations.

With respect to how the SOI Global Dialogue can best support regional-scale work, they pointed to: assisting regional



Darius Campbell, North East Atlantic Fishery Commission

cooperation efforts to become more specific and tangible, particularly on technical issues such as low-impact fishing methods; and devising a concrete roadmap that would showcase both the need for regional cooperation and that the process will have concrete results.

On how the SOI Global Dialogue can best support inter-regional experience sharing, they suggested: identifying hot spots of best practices on key issues which other regions could then learn from; designating focal points for regional coordination in each region; and involving participants in the elaboration of future SOI programming.

Summary and Conclusion

On Friday, the Co-Chairs presented the draft Busan Outcome, which is the co-chairs' summary of the meeting. Suggestions from the floor on the document included the possibility of enhanced references to: extending collaboration beyond RSOs and RFBs to include relevant intergovernmental organizations working within this nexus; the high adaptive capacity of RSOs and RFBs in dealing with the COVID-19 challenge; the importance and usefulness of the SOI; and the need for capacity building and funding.

Closing of the Meeting

In concluding statements, Co-Chair Waruinge said the main "message" from participants to the various meeting organizers should be that the SOI process is unique and important, and, thus, worth funding. Co-Chair Ásmundsson lauded the CBD Secretariat's efforts to push for global biodiversity goals to be implemented regionally, and through organizations that already exist. Appiott then stressed that the process was devised as a platform to be owned and driven by stakeholders, and that the process now needs to "trickle down" to Member States. Finally, he highlighted the important work of the Republic of Korea in promoting Ocean governance and multilateralism. Co-Chair Waruinge closed the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Special Information Session by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea

Sharing Experiences on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity in Korea: On Wednesday afternoon, Deokhun Han, Korea Maritime Institute, presented on Korean



Dixon Waruinge, Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention; **Stefán Ásmundsson**, Iceland Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and **Joe Appiott**, CBD Secretariat

Oceans and Fisheries Official Development Assistance (ODA) and its direction, noting the Republic of Korea has the largest ODA growth rate among the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, with a total ODA of USD 3.369 billion in 2022. Han emphasized the convergence between sub-sectors of the Ocean and fisheries and other sectors, and highlighted his country's support for the Vietnamese Seafarer training and capacity-building project and for a national aquaculture development center in Kyrgyzstan.

Yeongdon Kim, Korea Marine Environment Management Cooperation, described the data and strategies that went into devising the Republic of Korea's fourth Comprehensive Plan for Climate Change Response in Oceans and Fisheries, set to run from 2022-2024. He said the country's most recent Nationally Determined Contribution represents a progression compared to its previous iteration and that his country devised a 2050 carbon-neutral objective based on the principles of accountability, inclusion, and fairness.

Bong-Oh Kwon, Blue Carbon Research Center, presented on blue carbon research in the Republic of Korea, drawing attention to the potential for carbon storage in tidal flats and efforts towards coastal wetland restoration to expand carbon sinks, as well as a partnership with Indonesia on blue carbon.

Ilkang Na, Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, said the Republic of Korea seeks to transition from being a passive "rule taker" to an active "rule maker" in various RFMO-related themes. He mentioned, among others, efforts to: increase the country's research contributions in the areas of ecosystem monitoring and protection of cetaceans; promote cooperation with developing countries, including through an Overseas Fishery Cooperation Center located at Pukyong National University in Busan; and initiate more frequent opportunities for bilateral communication with RFMOs.

Upcoming Meetings

27th Session of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) Council (Part III): The ISA Council will continue to discuss items on its agenda, including draft regulations on the exploitation of mineral resources in the area and status of contracts for exploration and related matters, including information on the periodic review of the implementation of approved plans of work for exploration. **dates:** 31 October-11 November 2022 **location:** Kingston, Jamaica **www:** isa.org.jm/

UN Climate Change Conference: The 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 27) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the 17th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 17), and the fourth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 4) will begin work on the Global Stocktake, among other matters. **dates:** 6-18 November 2022 **location:** Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt **www:** unfccc.int/cop27

19th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP 19): CITES COP 19 is expected to take place in Panama in 2022. The COP convenes

every two to three years to review implementation of the Convention, including: reviewing progress in the conservation of species included in the Appendices; considering proposals to amend the lists of species in Appendices I and II; and considering discussion documents and reports from Parties, permanent committees, the Secretariat, and working groups. **dates:** 14-25 November 2022 **location:** Panama City, Panama **www:** cites.org/eng/disc/cop.php

Plastics INC-1: The first meeting of the INC to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, is scheduled to begin its work. **dates:** 28 November–2 December 2022 **location:** Punta del Este, Uruguay **www:** unep.org/events/conference/international-negotiating-committee-meeting-inc-1

5th Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (WG2020): This meeting will take place back-to-back with the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15). At the Group's fourth meeting in July, negotiators agreed to convene a fifth meeting of the WG2020 to advance "work on the most contested targets as well as iron out the text on targets close to reaching agreement." **dates:** 3-5 December 2022 **location:** Montreal, Quebec, Canada **www:** cbd.int/meetings/

UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15): This meeting includes CBD COP 15, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the fourth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing. The meetings will review the achievement and delivery of the CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and take a final decision on the post-2020 GBF, among other matters. **dates:** 3-19 December 2022 **location:** Montreal, Canada **www:** cbd.int/meetings

5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5): The 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) will bring together Ocean conservation professionals to chart a course towards protecting 30% of the global Ocean by 2030. IMPAC5 will be jointly hosted by the Host First Nations together with the Province of British Columbia, the Government of Canada, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and IUCN. Its goals include providing an opportunity for countries to come together to develop a roadmap to a post-2020 GBF for Ocean conservation and showcase the important role of MPAs in addressing the climate crisis and conserving biodiversity in a post-pandemic world. **dates:** 3-9 February 2023 **location:** Vancouver, Canada **www:** impac5.ca/

The Ocean Visions Biennial Summit 2023: The Ocean Visions Biennial Summit 2023 will focus on innovation to advance both knowledge and solutions at the Ocean-climate nexus. Organized by Advancing Earth and Space Science, the meeting will discuss existing and emerging problems at the interface of the Ocean and climate crises, with a forward look at projected climate conditions and how current and potential approaches and solutions can be effectively and sustainably implemented. **dates:** 4-6 April 2023 **location:** Atlanta, US **www:** agu.org/Ocean-Visions-Summit

Resumed Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement 2023: The Resumed Review Conference is mandated

to assess the effectiveness of the agreement and the adequacy of its provisions and, if necessary, propose means of strengthening the substance and methods of implementation of those provisions. **dates:** 22-26 May 2023 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/review_conf_fish_stocks.htm

28th Session of the ISA Assembly: The Assembly meeting will address issues of general policy for the Authority, including the budget. A special session of the Assembly may be called upon request of Member States following Part III of the 27th session Council meeting in November 2022. **dates:** 24-28 July 2023 **location:** Kingston, Jamaica **www:** isa.org.jm

Resumed BBNJ IGC-5: This session will continue to negotiate, and possibly agree on, an international legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ. **dates:** TBD **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/bbnj/

For additional meetings, see sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

BBNJ	Marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLME+	Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems
CPPS	Permanent Commission for the South Pacific
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOBI	Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative
IMPAC	International Marine Protected Areas Congress
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
ISA	International Seabed Authority
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing
MPA	Marine Protected Areas
NEAFC	North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECM	Other effective area-based conservation measures
OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
REMP	Regional Environmental Management Plans
RFB	Regional Fisheries Bodies
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organizations
RSO	Regional Seas Organizations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOI	Sustainable Ocean Initiative
SWIOFC	Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission
UNEP	UN Environment
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly