



**United Nations
Environment Programme**

Distr. LIMITED

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/7
15 May 2019

Original: ENGLISH

Eighth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory
Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected
Areas and Wildlife (SPA) in the Wider Caribbean Region

Panama City, Panama, 5 - 7 December 2018

REPORT OF THE MEETING

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ACRONYMS

ACS	Association of Caribbean States
AIDA	Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense
AFB	Agence française pour la biodiversité (<i>French Agency for Biodiversity</i>)
AMEP	Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution
BWE	Ballast Water Exchange
BEST Initiative	The Voluntary Scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas
BIOPAMA	Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme
BMU	The Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety of Germany
CABI	CAB International (formerly Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau)
CaMPAM	Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network and Forum
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CARI'MAM	Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network
CARIB-COAST	Caribbean Coastal Risks related to climate change for a monitoring and prevention network
CaribWEN	Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network
Cariwet	Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative
CAR/RCU	Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBF	Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
CCAD	Central American Commission for Environment and Development
CCI	Caribbean Challenge Initiative
CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme
CERMES	Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLME ⁺	Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
COP	Conference of Parties
CRC	Coral Restoration Consortium
CREHO	Ramsar Regional Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
DSS	Decision Support System
EAF	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries
EBM	Ecosystem Based Management
ECMMAN	Climate Resilient Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Areas Network
ECRE	Bluefinance Economics for Coral Reef Ecosystems
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
GCFI	Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
GCRMN	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOA-ON	Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network.
IAC	Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IBA	Important Bird and Biodiversity Area
ICRI	International Coral Reef Initiative
IFRECOR	French Initiative for Coral Reefs
IOC-UNESCO	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
IOCARIBE	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IWC	International Whaling Commission

LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LBS	Protocol Concerning Land-Based Sources of Pollution
LME	Large Marine Ecosystems
MamaCocoSea	Marine Mammal Conservation Corridor South East America
MARFund	Mesoamerican Reef Fund
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MedPAN	Mediterranean Protected Areas Network
MMA	Marine Managed Area
MMAP	Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region
MMAP-PA	Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region's Priority Actions: Five Year Plan
MoC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NAHW-SSP	North Atlantic Humpback Whale Sister Sanctuary Program
NAMPAN	North American Marine Protected Areas Network
NFWF	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
NGO	Non-Government Organizations
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OAS	Organisation of American States
OSCC	Overall Coordination and Common Costs
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
ORAMCC	IUCN's Regional Office for Mexico, Meso-America and the Caribbean
OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
PA	Protected Area
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PSF	Policy Support Facility
RAC	Regional Activity Centre
RAMPAO	African regional Network of Marine Protected Areas
Ramsar	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
RCDR	Reef Check Dominican Republic
RLC	Regional Lionfish Committee
ROLAC	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
SAMOA	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action
SAP	Strategic Action Programme
SCSCB	BirdsCaribbean (formerly Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLMR	Shared Living Marine Resources
SBMNS	NOAA's Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary
SOMEE	State of the Marine Ecosystems and Associated Economies
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region
STAC	Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
STRAP	Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environmental Assembly
UN Environment	United Nations Environment Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

WHMSI

Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative

WIDECAST

Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network

INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of Plenipotentiaries on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region held in Kingston, 15 to 18 January 1990, adopted the SPAW Protocol to the Cartagena Convention, which came into force on 18 June 2000. Article 20 of the SPAW Protocol establishes the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC). This Article provides that each Party shall appoint a scientific expert appropriately qualified in the field covered by the Protocol as its representative on the Committee, who may be accompanied by other experts and advisors appointed by that Party. Article 20 also provides that the Committee may also seek information from scientifically and technically qualified experts and organisations.
2. In light of the above, and in keeping with Decision No. 1 of the First Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) (COP1) (Havana, Cuba, 24 - 25 September 2001) and Decisions of COP9 (Cayenne, French Guiana, 13 March 2017), this Meeting was convened by the Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention in Panama City, Panama, 5 - 7 December 2018.
3. The proposed objectives of the Eighth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC8) to the SPAW Protocol were to:
 - Review the status of Activities of the SPAW Subprogramme for 2017-2018, including activities of the Regional Activity Centre for SPAW (SPAW-RAC) in Guadeloupe;
 - Review the submissions for the protected areas proposed by Parties for listing under the SPAW Protocol and make recommendations to SPAW COP10;
 - Review the species proposed by Contracting Parties for listing under the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol following the existing criteria and revised process proposed by SPAW COP9, and make recommendations to SPAW COP10;
 - Review the reports for Exemptions under Article 11(2) of the SPAW Protocol proposed by Contracting Parties and make recommendations for adoption by SPAW COP10; and
 - Develop the 2019-2020 Workplan and Budget of the SPAW Subprogramme for subsequent approval by SPAW COP10 and the Eighteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan of the Caribbean Environment Programme, and Fifteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region tentatively in March 2019, respectively.
4. The seventeen (17) Contracting Parties to the SPAW Protocol were invited to the Meeting to nominate their respective representatives to be part of the SPAW STAC8 in keeping with Article 20 of the Protocol. Other member Governments of CEP, United Nations agencies and non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations were invited to participate as Observers. The list of participants is included in Annex IV to this Report.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING OF THE MEETING

5. The Meeting was opened by the Secretariat on Wednesday, 5 December, at 2:35p.m., in Panama City, Panama. Ms. Ileana Lopez Programme Officer (.PO) for the SPAW Sub-programme welcomed participants and thanked the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and donor Governments such as Italy for promoting Ecosystems Based Management (EBM), and the Government of Panama for hosting and providing support to the Meeting.
6. She invited the focal point from the Government of Panama, Marino Abrego to provide welcome remarks.

7. Mr. Abrego welcomed Participants and Observers on behalf of the Government of Panama and the Minister of Environment, Mr. Emilio Sempres, and National Director of Coasts and Seas of the Ministry of Environment, Mr. Eduardo Polo. He thanked the Secretariat for having Panama host the STAC8 and hoped that the Meeting would be able to cover the agenda towards achieving recommendations for presentation to the COP in 2019. He wished for productive outcomes and for Participants to enjoy their stay in Panama.
8. On behalf of the United Nation Environment Programme Latin America and Caribbean Office (ROLAC), Ms. Lopez invited Regional Coordinator for Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Mr. Alberto Pacheco, to give additional remarks on behalf of the Director, Mr. Leo Heileman.
9. Mr. Pacheco thanked those in attendance and the Government of Panama for hosting the Meeting. This was a pivotal time for both the Protocol and the marine and coastal environment in the region. The Cartagena Convention was a unique legal and institutional framework bringing together Member States and territories in the spirit of cooperation to address many of the current, and emerging challenges in the management of marine and coastal resources in the Caribbean. These challenges (e.g. economic crises, food security and territorial conflicts) were equally difficult to address by the various organizations working to protect the environment. However, there continued to be a strong call from the global community having recognized the deeply intertwined link between the environment, society and economic prosperity. Within the context of sustainable development, a resilient and robust environment was needed to provide ecosystem services for human well-being and was key to building a viable long-term development path for all countries.
10. Ocean welfare had become key in discussions on *Blue Economy* as it held possibilities for socio-economic growth and food security. This was particularly applicable for the region and provided opportunities for integrating/harmonizing individual sectors towards a greater understanding on how to protect the natural capital of the Caribbean Sea. The task of harmonization would not be easy considering vast issues related to pollution from land-based sources (e.g. wastewater, nutrients from agriculture, marine litter/micro-plastics and overfishing to name a few). The Convention and its Protocols having been in place for over thirty-five (35) years, had made significant progress to address the primary drivers of change in the Caribbean Sea through a collaborative mindset that had enabled all Contracting Parties to benefit.
11. Admittedly, there was still a long way to go to unleash the potential of Blue economy with its promise of a sustainable future for our oceans. Within the context of the Cartagena Convention, this implied increasing commitments and implementation towards ecosystem-based management and the utilization of adequate tools for decision making, such as marine spatial planning and economic valuation. It was hoped that deliberations in the Meeting would be successful taking place in a spirit of cooperation and common purpose.
12. Ms. Lopez thanked Mr. Pacheco for his remarks and endorsed the important role of all Parties in ecosystem management.
13. Opening statements were then provided by Ms. Lorna Inniss, Coordinator of the Caribbean Environment Programme and Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention.
14. Ms. Inniss welcomed participants and acknowledged the Secretariat staff for their hard work in preparing for the Meeting. She thanked the host Government of Panama and welcomed new focal points to the SPAW family highlighting that the Protocol was celebrating eighteen (18) years of dedicated work on marine biodiversity. During this time, Contracting Parties, non-governmental organizations, volunteer experts, civil society, donors, staff and many partners around the world had invested resources and energy to take necessary measures to protect, preserve and sustainably manage areas to safeguard their special value (including threatened or endangered species of flora and fauna within the Wider Caribbean Region). The Secretariat was grateful for these efforts as it was evident that without conservation, global biodiversity and ecosystems would be more depleted. The Meeting was reminded that the Secretariat belonged to the Member States who were responsible for the major successes of the Protocol's implementation.
15. She recognized the continued and strong partnership with the Government of France as host of the Regional Activity Centre for SPAW (SPAW-RAC) in Guadeloupe which provided crucial support to the Secretariat through the delivery of concrete activities, especially in support of the Protocol's objectives on listing

- protected areas and species. The Secretariat remained grateful to France for this ongoing collaboration and urged other countries to consider making their expertise available as satellite institutions - there were modalities for experts to be seconded to the Secretariat itself for a specified period, not just to support the work, but to also improve capacity. She commended those Member States who found ways to provide financial support over and above the indicative contributions to the Caribbean Trust Fund for the operations of the Secretariat. Given the current era of limited resources, it was imperative to find innovative ways to do more with less. The Governments of the United States and others who assisted in finding additional resources for implementation were greatly appreciated.
16. The Secretariat would also be producing an information paper at the SPAW COP10 seeking to improve efficiencies in the intergovernmental process to harmonize with other Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. This would involve moving from three (3) COP Meetings to a single COP and giving SPAW and LBS Contracting Parties the sole right to make decisions on issues related to the Protocols.
 17. Both the Secretariat and the SPAW-RAC were noted as having undergone major transitions since the last biennium in terms of human resources and institutional changes. The new SPAW PO, Ms Ileana Lopez, was formally introduced having taken up the position in April 2018, while also acknowledging the retirement of Ms. Alessandra Vanzella-Khoury and her legacy of engagement over the years which would not be forgotten. Coming from UN Environment headquarters (Nairobi) and as a native of Guatemala (a Member State), Ms. Lopez had extensive experience within the region and worked in various capacities over the years and as such, the Secretariat was pleased to have her as part of the team.
 18. It was the distinct pleasure of the Secretariat to inform the Meeting that the Republic of Honduras had ratified the Cartagena Convention and all three (3) Protocols as of October 2018 - intentions to officially welcome them as a Contracting Party during the upcoming COP10 and IGM. Since 1999 the Protocol had also benefitted Member States through the strengthening of marine protected areas (MPAs), conservation of critical species, and to date, thirty-two (32) protected areas had been listed under the Protocol and more species had been included in the Annexes for protection.
 19. Overall, the scope of the Protocol was considered catalytic in promoting the sustainable development of the region (especially MPAs) which enabled commercial species to reproduce and thrive, which supported the creation of new jobs in tourism, research and education. With an estimated 100 million people living on or near the coast in the greater Caribbean region, conservation and sustainable development were therefore crucial for social and economic well-being. Some conservative estimates placed the size of the Caribbean ocean economy at USD407 billion (2012) equalling 14 to 27% of the global ocean economy, even though the Caribbean Sea area accounted for just 1% of the total ocean landscape.
 20. The Meeting would be invited to review the draft Workplan, prioritize activities, and make recommendations for adoption by the SPAW COP10. These deliberations were considered critical to the future direction of both the SPAW sub-programme and the work of the Secretariat. A draft Sustainable Development Strategy for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols would also be presented at the upcoming IGM and would include a *Resources Mobilization Strategy* for consideration by Member States. It was anticipated that if approved, this strategy would guide the work of the Secretariat for the next five (5) to ten (10) years. Additionally, many countries of the region had been requesting a regional *Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy* to guide in the development of their individual national strategies. Papers would therefore be submitted as information papers during the IGM.
 21. Given that oceans had made it to the top of the international agenda, UN Environment had been busy with the coordination and development of programmes geared towards this area. The Meeting was reminded of the 4th UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) to be held in Nairobi (11-15 March 2019) and attendance by Member States was encouraged. The Coordinator closed by expressing a desire for meeting with the various delegations and hoped that the deliberations would be positive in the spirit of collaboration and partnership.
 22. Ms. Lopez thanked the Coordinator for the inspiring remarks and reminded participants of the objectives of the Meeting according to the Agenda Items outlined and informed about the Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network (CaribWEN) Side Event organized by the Caribbean Environment Programme in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and financial support from Animal Welfare Institute .

She requested a moment of silence for victims of natural disasters and social issues within the region, and reflection on the role that the Meeting could play in improving these challenges.

AGENDAITEM 2: ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

2.1. Rules of Procedure

23. The Meeting agreed to apply *mutatis mutandis* the Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention). (See Reference Document UNEP, 2012)

2.2. Election of Officers

24. The Meeting elected from among the representatives of the Contracting Parties to SPAW, the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, and the Rapporteur for the conduct of the Meeting:

Chair(person): Marino Abrego (Panama)

Vice-Chairperson: Erica Nunez (United States of America, US)

Rapporteur: Paul Hoetjes (Netherlands)

2.3. Organization of Work

25. English, French and Spanish were the working languages of the Meeting and simultaneous interpretation in these languages was provided. The working documents of the Meeting were also available in all the working languages. The Provisional List of Documents of the Meeting was presented in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.1 and is included as Annex II to this report.
26. The Chairperson reminded the Meeting that if necessary, it was possible to convene in plenary sessions with the assistance of working groups, which could be established by the Chairperson, no simultaneous interpretation would be available for the working groups. Participants were reminded that, given the length of the Meeting, breaking into working groups might not be feasible and participants were therefore expected to come prepared, having reviewed all working documents as appropriate, in order to provide concrete inputs at the time of discussion. The Meeting was convened in plenary session.

AGENDAITEM 3: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

27. The Meeting was invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda of the Meeting, prepared by the Secretariat based on inputs received from the Contracting Parties during preparations for the Meeting, on relevant recommendations and decisions from previous STAC and COP Meetings of the SPAW Protocol, as well as on emerging issues of relevance to the biodiversity of the Wider Caribbean. The Provisional Agenda proposed by the Secretariat was presented in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/1. The Agenda as approved by the Meeting is contained in Annex I.
28. The Chairperson took the opportunity to thank the Secretariat, Contracting Parties and Observers for supporting and organizing the Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 4: STATUS OF ACTIVITIES OF THE SPAW SUBPROGRAMME FOR 2017-2018, INCLUDING ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE FOR SPAW (SPAW-RAC) IN GUADELOUPE

29. The Chairperson invited Ms. Ileana Lopez of the Secretariat to present “Status of Activities of the SPAW Subprogramme for 2017-2018” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.3) including what had been achieved and developed by the Protocol over the past eighteen (18) years.
30. In her presentation she outlined the history of the Protocol and the specific SDG’s linked to its mandate. An update on ratification was provided which reflected an increase in the number of Contracting Parties moving from nine (9) in 2000, to seventeen (17) as of 2018. She explained that the yearly expenditure for the Protocol had fluctuated over the years and was often affected by donor contributions along with staff and other changes within the Secretariat.
31. An overview was provided of key donors along with updates of the species and protected areas under the Protocol and their financial value. Specific achievements included several action and management plans with various partners, an increase in the number of regional MPAs (from 200 in 1997 to 324 in 2018 – thirty-two (32) of which were SPAW listed sites), and thirteen (13) Training of Trainers (ToT) courses in the three (3) languages (8 English, 4 Spanish, 1 French) across the region.
32. There were also several Small Grant initiatives amounting to over USD2 million since 2000 with the most recent programme funded by The Nature Conservancy Climate Resilient Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Areas Network (TNC ECMANN project), for six (6) Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) valued at USD220,000 each between 2014 and 2017. Specific opportunities to improve the work of the subprogramme were suggested such as more active participation of Parties, committed and active executive and advisory teams, and an improved list format to promote discussion.
33. The Chairperson invited remarks on the presentation.
34. The delegate of Colombia extended formal thanks and welcomed the new SPAW PO likewise acknowledging the work of her predecessor. She expressed appreciation for the work of the Protocol over the eighteen (18) year period.
35. The delegate of the Dominican Republic (DR) thanked the Chairperson and congratulated the new SPAW PO for the summary while noting the considerable accumulative work that had been done - imagined that all the true work could not be captured in such a short presentation. He expressed appreciation for the support of the Protocol especially in the work accomplished by his government and congratulated Honduras and the greater support from other countries within the region
36. The delegate of France requested a change to Agenda Item 6 regarding species proposed by the Parties with wording to reflect a simplified procedure for listing the species based on the IUCN Red list. This would provide an alternative to a lengthy document/report for species in critical danger.
37. The Chairperson requested feedback from the Meeting on this proposal.
38. The delegate of the US, Ms. Nunez, requested clarification on whether this was a proposal point for submission to the COP, *or* simply a point for discussion - the latter would be considered as a new agenda item.
39. The delegate from France clarified that the request was to add this point to the agenda since it was not raised during adoption. He apologised and explained the intention was to have the matter discussed by the STAC for subsequent proposal to the COP, and reiterated the importance of a simplified process to facilitate the listing for critical species.
40. The delegate from Colombia thanked the Government of France for the proposal and noted that this was also on the radar for her country. However, it could be complex to consider this request especially since no previous notice was received.

41. The delegate of France thanked the Chair and the delegate of Colombia and apologised for not making a formal proposal earlier noting previous dialogue with some delegates. It was clarified that this was a request for consideration by the COP, not personal or specific to France, but more to the overall objectives of the Protocol and the protection of species.
42. The Chairperson reemphasized that this was a matter for consideration under [Agenda Item 6](#) and proposed revisiting at that point. The Secretariat was invited to present on the Status of Activities of the Protocol 2017-2018.
43. Ms. Lopez outlined that the day-to-day coordination for implementation of programme activities continued to be overseen by the SPAW PO (filled by a consultant from March 2017 – April 2018), with support from the SPAW Programme Assistant and the SPAW-RAC in Guadeloupe. Specific activities for the 2017-2018 Workplan fell under five (5) major programme elements (sub-programmes):
 - a) Programme Coordination;
 - b) Strengthening of Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean Region;
 - c) Development of Guidelines for Protected Areas and Species Management;
 - d) Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species; and
 - e) Conservation and Sustainable Use of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems
44. Under *Programme Coordination*, it was recalled that the Secretariat had organized the COP9 held in Cayenne, French Guiana (March 2017) and now STAC8 in Panama, along with the development of a strategic and streamlined 2018-2019 SPAW Workplan to meet objectives in the coming biennium. There were twenty-nine (29) major meetings in seventeen (17) different countries organized and/or attended to continue promoting the Protocol and develop synergies. Many were spearheaded or sponsored by the Protocol with Secretariat participation funded by meeting organizers in most cases.
45. Honduras was welcomed once more as the latest country to ratify the Protocol with the Secretariat actively engaging Costa Rica and Haiti to follow suit - the latter having signalled its intention to ratify.
46. During the biennium there was increased collaboration with a variety of partner organizations/countries and donor agencies to facilitate the successful implementation of SPAW projects (e.g. World Wildlife Fund (WWF), TNC and the Waitt Institute). This also included data sharing, environmental education and awareness, and capacity building with entities such as the [CBD](#), [CITES](#), [CMS](#), [CERMES of the University of the West Indies](#), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN)/International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (FAO-WECAFC), and [UNODC](#).
47. Main outputs for *Protected Areas* concentrated on the listing of additional MPAs (National Park Cayos de San Felipe in Cuba) bringing to the total number of SPAW listed sites to thirty-two (32, while France and the Kingdom of the Netherlands had submitted new areas for consideration by the relevant Working Group. There were more MPA practitioners involved in training programmes designed to improve response to management issues and emerging environmental threats in marine and coastal areas, and grant funding provided for capacity building. Specific activities included an MPA Science and Management session during the 70th GCFI Meeting and the 13th ToT session in Barbados where twenty-one (21) MPA practitioners from fourteen (14) countries were trained (with funding made possible through the EBM project and [IUCN's BIOPAMA](#)).
48. There was improved dissemination of information on MPAs with more practitioners, policy makers, scientists and other stakeholders engaging with, and contributing to the CaMPAM internet forum and MPA database. Stronger relationships and collaboration were developed between stakeholders, as well as with international/regional experts with continued efforts to revitalize the Cooperation Programme of SPAW-listed MPAs and to further the cooperation with the [OSPAR](#) Commission.
49. Attention was called to the new exemptions report submitted by the US (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40 /INF.9) and Contracting Parties were encouraged to submit likewise using the reporting format (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/3 Rev.1) before engaging in activities that were not in compliance with their legal obligations as signatories to the Protocol.

50. Much progress was made regarding *Species Conservation* with the development of a strategy for implementation of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the CRFM to promote improved management of fisheries species, recovery plans for commercially important species, and control and mitigation of impacts from marine invasive species in the region. There were also renewed efforts to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Whaling Commission Secretariat (IWC) to promote the implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region (MMAP). There was increased commitment by CEP Member States for the newly developed Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network (CaribWEN) and collaboration established with [CITES](#) and [UNODC](#). New SPAW species were proposed under Annex II and III of the Protocol and for the first time, cartilaginous fish were incorporated in the list of protected species owing to their crucial role in regulating marine ecosystems.
51. The *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems* included participation at the 32nd General Meeting of ICRI held in Nairobi (7 - 9 December 2017), and the strengthening of the GCRMN Regional Nodes within the region by enhancing the ability of countries to monitor and protect coral reef ecosystems using standardized data collection and reporting methods. The Meeting was informed that for the past two (2) days, under the CLME+ project, representatives from several Contracting Parties and other partner organizations had been working on the development of the “*State of Marine Ecosystems and shared Living Marine Resources in the Wider Caribbean (CLME+ and Gulf of Mexico)*” report, and discussing a *Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the CLME+*. (see paragraph 339 and 407 for more details)
52. A status update on COP9 activities was provided with the Secretariat urging Governments of the region who had not yet done so, to become Contracting Parties to the Protocol and to participate more actively in the Working Groups established by the Parties. Efforts were also ongoing to further develop the MPA cooperation programme and encourage nomination of additional MPAs for listing. Key activities completed included the approval of the Reporting Format for Exemptions under Article 11 of the Protocol and adoption of the STAC7 Recommendations.
53. An overview of sub-programme costs during the biennium was provided with 2018 (USD2,140,040) experiencing a substantial uptick due primarily to funds under *Strengthening of Protected Areas* from the EBM and CLME+ projects compared to 2017 (USD528,689).
54. The Chairperson invited comments on the presentation.
55. The delegate of the DR thanked the Chair and acknowledged the hard work of the Secretariat in developing the format (document *UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/3 Rev.1*). He noted a restoration project focused on ecosystems underway in the DR as part of national efforts aligned to the Protocol and additional activities that have been facilitated through funding from the European Union - this was also linked with work taking place in Cuba, Haiti and Honduras with focus on the terrestrial ecosystems, and other areas in the Caribbean region. Reference was made to a Ramsar project in the pipeline with Germany, however this was delayed due to issues with the release of funds - there were plans for this to come on stream in 2019 along with several initiatives with other countries.
56. The delegate of Colombia endorsed the sentiments expressed by the DR and thanked the Secretariat for its work while acknowledging the financial challenges, similar to the current situation being experienced in Colombia.
57. The delegate of the US, Ms. Nunez, thanked both the Secretariat and SPAW-RAC, and welcomed Ms. Lopez as new SPAW PO. Appreciation was conveyed for her hard work thus far and the US looked forward to continued collaboration with the Secretariat. Creative mechanisms were recommended for consideration to overcome some of the challenges identified during the presentation – further details could be discussed. In regard to MPAs and fisheries, recalling the STAC7, the US had proposed a network of listed sites by utilizing NOAA along with work on coral reefs as the agency awarded grants in the convention area. For the Queen conch and other species such as the Spiny lobster, and Nassau Grouper, support was available via Working Groups spearheaded by the WECAFC/CRFM (noting that the US sponsored the 2nd WECFAC/CFMC/CRFM/OSPESCA Spawning Aggregations Working Group meeting in March 2018).
58. The delegate of St. Lucia thanked Secretariat and the Government of Panama for hosting the Meeting along with their hospitality. He acknowledged the presentation and the hard work of the Secretariat and the quality of work being put out by the Protocol despite the financial challenges. The Sargassum influx was highlighted as impacting several

countries, and in reviewing the white paper (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.8), that it appeared to reflect the relevant issues along with appropriate initiatives to counteract them. St. Lucia looked forward to the programme of work in the coming year.

59. The delegate of the Netherlands thanked the Chair and complemented the Secretariat on the presentations, and expressed that it had been both an honour and pleasure to work with the Secretariat since 2000 when the Protocol became active. It had grown over the years from a meeting focused on rules and procedures, to a system committed to the protection of species, development of guidelines, and active management of PAs. Over the years, the Kingdom of the Netherlands had endeavoured to contribute if even in a small way and was happy to be a part of the various Working Groups. There had been several bonuses in connection with the Protocol as the Kingdom has had the opportunity to participate in several initiatives (e.g. the CAMPAM network) and looked forward to a reinvigorated Secretariat with continued collaborations in the coming year.
60. The Chairperson invited Ms. Sandrine Pivard, Director of SPAW-RAC, to present the report and update on the additional support provided by the RAC to meet the objectives of this sub-programme.
61. Ms Pivard thanked the Secretariat for all its hard work and was happy to be a part of the team. She recalled the work of Ms. Vanzella-Khouri over the years and Ms. Monica Borobia who filled in until a replacement was hired.
62. Ms. Pivard explained that the SPAW-RAC (*created in 2000 via an agreement between Un Environment and the Government of France*) was located in Guadeloupe and up until September 2018, had been hosted by the National Park of Guadeloupe (since 2009) - as of January 2019, it was integrated with the *Direction de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement*. The functioning costs of the RAC were covered by the French Government, including salaries for: a Director, one (1) Senior Project Coordinator, and one (1) Administrative Assistant - along with supplemental short-term staff or civic service volunteers. Since the last STAC, staff complement was reduced from a maximum of five (5), down to two (2) within recent months. Approximately €1.5 million in funding had been spent in the last two (2) years to sustain several projects with additional funds from TNC/[The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety \(BMU\)](#) and UN Environment. However, it had been a challenge to initiate new projects (e.g. CARIMAM, and the CARIB Coast project - already approved but not yet launched by the RAC as it was not administratively possible).
63. Ms. Pivard highlighted that the RAC supported the Secretariat by contributing to *Programme Coordination* through joint programming/networking and fundraising of relevant activities, preparation of the reports for SPAW listings (PAs and species), representing the Secretariat at various fora and assisting with preparation for the biennial meetings (including translation), and maintaining the trilingual [RAC website](#) and SPAW quarterly newsletter. Support was also provided for various activities for the *Strengthening of Protected Areas* through CaMPAM specific to the EBM project (scheduled to end in 2019), the ECMANN Project (coordinating the small grant component - ended in July 2017), and the *Transatlantic North-South Cooperation Project on Marine Protected Areas* (participating in two (2) twinning projects since July 2017).
64. Assistance was provided for follow-up actions mandated by COP9 regarding *Development of Guidelines for Protected Areas and Species Management* via the listing of protected areas and species under SPAW. There was a call for new proposals in Spring 2018 with assistance provided to Parties in the nomination process. This resulted in three (3) new areas being proposed - [one \(1\) from the Netherlands \(Mount Scenery National Park \(Saba island\)\), and two \(2\) from France \(National Natural Reserves of Amana and Kaw-Roura\). The list of species included in the Annexes was also revised, and six \(6\) new species have been proposed for listing under Annex II by both France and the Netherlands, and one \(1\) new species proposed for listing under Annex III by the Netherlands.](#)
65. Activities for further follow-up include an evaluation of the existing PAs, improved inventory of species already listed (esp. marine mammals, taxa of coral), developing a dynamic way to exchange information within Working Groups and between Contracting Parties inter-STAC, and developing the network of sites / support for the Cooperation Programme.

66. Achievements under the *Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species* included an Action Plan for the conservation of marine mammals (MMAP) in the Wider Caribbean Region consisting of the dissemination of a pamphlet on principles and guidelines for whale watching activities, and “*Mon Ecole Ma Baleine*” (translation “my school my whale”) funded by the RAC. Following an application for EU funding in Spring 2017 and validation a year later in 2018, the CARI’MAM project focusing on marine mammals was [finally launched in October 2018](#). It was led by the AGOA Sanctuary/L’Agence française de la biodiversité (AFB) with the SPAW-RAC, several SPAW MPAs, along with representatives from the Netherlands, Dominican Republic, Cuba, and the Turk and Caicos Islands in attendance.
67. Under CARI’MAM, the RAC will lead four (4) work packages linked to outputs such as an assessment on the legislation on the protection of marine mammals, capacity building, and support for sustainable/compatible whale watching activities. Overall combined funding (2019-2020) between the EU and SPAW-RAC will be approximately €600,000. The RAC participated as Observer on behalf of the Secretariat and contributed to the [2nd CMS MOU meeting and workshop on sharks](#) held in Bonaire (November 2017). Work on sea turtles continued with the WIDECASST network and for invasive alien species, efforts were sustained in networking with stakeholders in the control of lionfish.
68. With 2018 designated International Year of the Reef. (IYOR), the *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems* involved numerous activities focused on coral reefs and the GCRMN-Caribbean with the RAC serving as steering committee chair, and representation ICRI and Coral Restoration Consortium (CRC) forums. Outputs included the development of guidelines for socio-economic monitoring presented to the COP9, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) funding renewed until 2019, and two (2) training workshops organized by the RAC (Jamaica, 2017 and Sint Maarten, 2018) on biophysical monitoring, and future trends/socio-economic value of corals in the Caribbean.
69. Progress on mangroves was primarily via funding (~€78,000 from 2014 to 2018) of the 2nd pilot project in the north of Haiti integrating mangrove reforestation and public awareness for local communities through a partnership with Prefecture Guadeloupe, the French Embassy in Haiti and the SPAW-RAC. Additional EU funding (~€350,000/launched in summer 2018) was also secured for a second project, CARIBCOAST (2019-2020) for the implementation of activities related to soft ecosystem solutions, coral reefs and mangroves ecosystems. Advancements in sustainable tourism and funding of PAs was through the implementation of the Blue Finance Project in Barbados which was funded by the UN Environment-Coral Reef Unit (2015-2017).
70. Work on Sargassum focused on networking of stakeholders involved in communication/awareness, and research and management of the influx with tentative cooperation (dependent on funding) with international organizations (e.g. Association of Caribbean States (ACS), GCFI, UWI, Abidjan Convention, Sargasso Sea Commission) and UN Environment Global Programmes.
71. Though not formally part of the SPAW sub-programme, achievements under the BEST initiative for Overseas territories was highlighted. The first phase **BEST III**: (funding ~€191,000 between 2014-2017) focused on *the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas and Definition of a Regional Investment Strategy Funding*. A second phase, **BEST 2.0** (~€300,000) includes almost twenty (20) projects implemented in the WCR including seven (7) SPAW territories under key themes (e.g. invasive species management, marine turtle conservation, coral reef restoration, lionfish control, protection of endemic species, reforestation/restoration of key areas for biodiversity, and establishment of MPAs). The project which commenced in 2017 is slated to end in 2019.
72. The Chairperson thanked the RAC for the presentation and invited comments and contributions from the Meeting.
73. The delegate of the Netherlands applauded the work of the SPAW-RAC acknowledging a tremendous job despite the challenges. He noted that the RAC was uniquely placed to attract European funding to aid the Protocol and encouraged continuation of these efforts.
74. The Secretariat (Ms. Inniss) added personal thanks to the Director of the RAC, and for her team being at the forefront despite all the challenges while being able to push through and support the sub-programme with

- fulfilling its mandate. It was hoped that for the new biennium once the RAC was settled, more would be accomplished over the next two (2) years.
75. The delegate of the DR expressed appreciation for the work accomplished and for the considerable efforts with limited funds. Work currently being carried out by the DR concerning invasive species, birds and specific initiatives focused on turtles protected under SPAW within protected areas was highlighted. Principles and guidelines for marine mammals also needed further development considering the link to livelihoods in the region. DR was one of the central areas for sperm and humpback whale watching which made substantial contributions to the economy (e.g. boat captains). It was recommended that the Protocol focus on strengthening this as a matter of priority as it was a benefit for the local community.
 76. The Director of the SPAW-RAC in response encouraged the DR to join CARI'MAM to see what could be accomplished via a partnership in the project.
 77. The delegate of the US, Mr. Gonzalo Cid, echoed support for the work of the RAC specifically the Director. It was important to emphasize challenges from the impacts of nature (hurricanes) during the biennium and extra recognition was needed considering the relocation of the RAC headquarters
 78. The delegate of Colombia thanked the RAC while recognizing the challenges of working with a small staff contingent. The need for utilizing the methodologies cited via ICRI was reiterated while noting the continuous discussions carried out from the meeting in Monaco in relation to work on parrotfish
 79. The Observer from Animal Welfare Institute, Ms. Courtney Vail, welcomed the new SPAW PO and expressed appreciation for the Secretariat and RAC continuing to accommodate Observers and affording them the opportunity to participate in the Meetings.
 80. The delegate of France also acknowledged with gratitude the work of both the Secretariat and the RAC over the last two (2) years.
 81. The Chairperson invited the CaMPAM Coordinator, Ms. Georgina Bustamante, to present an update on the network and its major activities during the biennium.
 82. The presentation outlined ongoing activities which included the CaMPAM List and database, and cooperation with international programmes and networks, while new developments involved the introduction of an expert group. Financial support was primarily from the Government of Italy (EBM-DSS project), the Governments of Germany and France through the agreement between SPAW-RAC and TNC ([CaMPAM-ECMMAN Small Grant Programme](#)), the IUCN-ORMACC/BIOPAMA programme (EU funding), the OSPAR Commission (MPA database improvement/exchange, and proposal development in collaboration with Sweden and Netherlands), and via Contracting Parties. Recalling the CaMPAM-ECMMAN Small Grant Programme, final payments were made for the six (6) grants (€8,000 -11,000 for Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St Christopher and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica).
 83. An overview was provided on the ToT programme supported by the Secretariat with funding from various NGOs and government agencies. To date there had been thirteen (13) editions (1999 – 2018) rotating between the three (3) languages (English, French, Spanish) and benefitting 220 MPA managers. For the 12th ToT in the DR (September 2016), six (6) grants (valued at USD4,000 ea.) were awarded (participants - Belize, Colombia, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Venezuela. and the DR). The 13th ToT (April 2018) took place in Barbados via a partnership agreement with UWI-CERMES and IUCN (USD75,000), providing six (6) grants (valued at USD5,000 ea.) (participants - Belize, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, and The Bahamas). The primary focus was on the development of an ecosystem-based management approach in MPAs and Decision Support Systems (DSS) linked to the EBM project. For this edition, more funding was available which offered greater geographic scope and enabled the sponsorship of four (4) non-SPAW countries.
 84. The CaMPAM Expert Group was launched in 2018 after mentorship pilot testing between 2013-2014 and is comprised of thirty-one (31) experts from seventeen (17) countries with varying qualifications and backgrounds including bilingual skills. It is voluntary a commitment and members assist with various aspects

- of the network (e.g. translation/review of proposals, reports, and documents, providing ad hoc advice, and coordinating specific activities). Progress continued on the CaMPAM website with migration to the CEP portal along with management of the LISTSERV circulating messages/newsletters to 190 new members. Additionally, there are now two (2) Whatsapp groups consisting of alumni from the 2016/ 2018 ToTs.
85. There was customary participation at the Annual GCFI conferences (2017/2018) via two (2) MPA sessions with the sponsorship of over twenty (20) professionals from across the region. Collaboration with other regional networks and programmes remained a priority and saw the development of a transatlantic initiative with the [Mediterranean Protected Areas Network \(MedPAN\)](#), [North American Marine Protected Areas Network \(NAMPAN\)](#) and [African regional Network of Marine Protected Areas \(RAMPAO\)](#). With support from the EU, Caribbean MPA managers were able to attend several meetings and presentations at international fora for these networks. The OSPAR Commission had also made a voluntary commitment to support CaMPAM and increase integration with UK, Dutch and French Caribbean MPAs.
 86. CaMPAM had garnered international recognition and continued to receive requests for participation from other regional networks. During the biennium, a paper prepared by [G. Bustamante, A. Vanzella-Khoury, R. Glazer and L. Collado-Vides](#) was one of five (5) most downloaded in the Aquila Digital Community administered by the University of Southern Mississippi. G. Bustamante and A. Vanzella-Khoury were recipients of the IUCN Fred Packard Award (2016) for outstanding work through CaMPAM.
 87. Based on a recent evaluation of the network, strengths identified included its permanence, continuity and longevity, along with its wide reach to scientists and practitioners in the region. It has also capitalized on a combination of tools to secure, financial support with technical assistance (e.g. the ToTs and grants for projects). The CaMPAM List has been a relevant resource for members on MPA science and practice alongside the sessions at GCFI which provide a vital forum for MPA practitioners. The recently created-expert group has ensured a sustained pool of committed and skilled specialists. Some challenges requiring attention were irregular and limited funding (none thus far for 2019 thereby jeopardizing CaMPAM's continuation) and more flexibility in hiring consultants and disbursing grants.
 88. The Chairperson thanked the CAMPAM coordinator for her presentation and invited comments from the Meeting.
 89. The delegate of the DR congratulated CAMPAM for the work developed particularly the ToT which instilled important capacity to help overcome the challenges of protected areas and species which should be considered an important accomplishment for the Protocol. He congratulated the organizations that have supported this initiative and highlighted the DR's intention to continue its support for the network. Overall it was important to secure funds to sustain this work.
 90. The delegate of St. Lucia commended the work of CAMPAM and the level of zeal and passion of its Coordinator in carrying out the work of the network. St. Lucia in particular had benefited particularly in the area of capacity building and training (e.g. training of fisheries officers in the Ministry of Environment and non-government staff such as marine managers of protected areas). The situation of losing valuable staff was not unique to St. Lucia and so this training was very important. The reach of the network and its bulletins was considerable and as such its impact should not be underestimated - perhaps the figures can be increased ten (10) fold. He encouraged continuation of the good work.
 91. The delegate of France thanked Ms. Bustamante for her work and took the opportunity to note that one of the ToT courses was held in Guadeloupe.
 92. The Secretariat (Ms. Inniss) underscored CaMPAM's importance to the Protocol especially the partnership with Ms. Bustamante which had been impactful in the region surpassing many expectations (e.g. *the IUCN Packard Award*). However, there was concern about the sustainability of the network and efforts would continue to secure funds so that its work could continue. One channel being explored was through partnerships across the Atlantic (e.g. with OSPAR and the Barcelona / Abidjan Conventions) which was practical from a large marine ecosystem perspective. Indeed, this was the way to go if the aim was basin wide management of protected areas - could open opportunities for EU funding in addition to other innovative/creative areas that had not been previously considered. Given the critical role of the

- network in maintaining the health of protected areas in the region, the Secretariat was open to further ideas and suggestions from Parties, particularly those that had expressed appreciation for CaMPAM.
93. Regarding sustained funding for CAMPAM and the ToT, the delegate of the Netherlands suggested monitoring the ICRI General Meeting which was underway in Monaco - outcomes may include new ways to finance coral reef work along with mangrove and seagrasses.
 94. The Chairperson invited Ms. Martha Prada, EBM project manager, to make a presentation based on achievements and outputs since April 2015.
 95. Ms. Prada recalled the EBM session earlier in the morning and gave a brief overview of the project goals, expected outcomes and progress to date. Project partners have included [PROGES \(Italian consulting firm focused on the DSS software\)](#), the SPAW-RAC, the Ministry of Environment of the DR (MARENA), ReefCheck DR, CERMES and GCFI. Most recently, the Caribbean Netherlands Science Institute was added to facilitate the development of a regional node in the Dutch Caribbean.
 96. An overview of linkages to activities previously discussed included financial support for the 12th and 13th ToTs, and development and improvement of the CaMPAM MPA database. She thanked countries that had already sent in information to support the database (e.g. US, Netherlands) and outlined that future steps would include sharing of information and lessons learned (very important) along with plans for a follow-up session by April 2019.
 97. The Chairperson thanked Ms. Prada for an excellent presentation.
 98. The delegate of Colombia also thanked Ms. Prada and acknowledged a broader presentation made by Colombia at the EBM session where important questions were addressed with much needed guidance on some areas. It was also suggested that consultations for the project be through SPAW focal points versus entities in countries (e.g. the National Parks and INVEMAR in the case of Colombia).
 99. The Observer from Environmental Support Services, Mr Lloyd Gardner, echoed the congratulations to the Protocol and SPAW-RAC and the work being done. He acknowledged Ms. Vanzella-Khouri having worked with her over the years and looked forward to the future. As it was important to think beyond the numbers presented along with the ability to move forward to ensure the sustainability for these programmes, there were three (3) questions which he hoped the Secretariat could address at some point, though not immediately -**1**) the SPAW Protocol included a requirement for reporting by Contracting Parties. Given the growing number of SPAW-listed PAs, and the need to report progress on conservation objectives under several MEAs, was there a timeline and framework for Parties to submit reports to the Secretariat; **2**) verbal and written reports suggest significant value added by the CaMPAM ToT programme based on the number of persons trained and the knowledge exchanged. Given the paucity of MPA management plans and the continuing questions of management capacity and effectiveness, had the outcomes and impacts of the ToT programme been evaluated; and **3**) the NOAA MPA Centre was reportedly working with the Protocol to develop a network of SPAW-listed MPAs. Would this effort address the listing criteria of 'connectivity' and 'resilience', and if so, could that information be shared for use by Parties and other states.
 100. Ms. Lopez thanked Mr. Gardner for this excellent intervention and recalled that the listing of protected areas had gradually increased having started with nine (9), then seventeen (17) and so forth. There were many challenges including financial and otherwise and so, this was a question she had asked upon joining the Secretariat. Her predecessor had acknowledged that despite best efforts, resources were simply insufficient though the Protocol had been able to improve some aspects of human capacity. It was hoped that some progress could be made in promoting the development of policies in the countries supporting the Protocol along with information exchange in the field.
 101. Ms. Inniss added that work under the CLME+ would enable an assessment of key habitats and the condition of these ecosystems. Once completed with baseline data, a review would be conducted on a

cyclical basis to determine whether the direction/decisions being taken were correctly aligned, as the points raised were important and critical considerations for the Convention moving forward.

102. The delegate of the Netherlands endorsed the sentiments of Mr. Gardner noting the continued cycle of training and yet still, being left with migration/loss and lack of resources - these were ongoing issues and the reality for small islands. It therefore meant that training needed to be ongoing to offset the loss of human resources. It was important for the international community to recognize these limitations and as such, larger countries should assist with funding on a wider scale as small islands could not facilitate this on their own.
103. The delegate of the US, Mr. Cid, commented that the NOAA MPA Centre proposal was being refreshed and it was very much aligned with SPAW PA listing. A different approach should be developed not only on the listing process, but also for the development of this network as this was not yet defined. A more meaningful process was also needed with a model that could be replicated in the region. It was recalled that this proposal initiated from a GCFI review in 2013 when the issue was previously raised by the Protocol. Stemming from this, the US had proposed several things **1)** this network should have additional objectives including for example, ecosystem connectivity and incentivization; **2)** the proposal was certainly in tune with what countries agreed to do at the IUCN World Parks Congress where NOAA co-sponsored a number of participants; **3)** it was agreed that more community involvement was needed in decision-making and plans of action. Therefore, these three (3) aspects should be clearly reflected in the work conducted in the region. He recommended that a small group be organized to help define this network to make it more meaningful.
104. The delegate of the DR believed that this was a sensitive subject and it was insufficient to have just a list of protected areas. However, it was also an enormous burden for the Secretariat to manage the content of these areas. The Meeting was reminded that it was the countries/Contracting Parties who chose to designate the sites and present them to the Secretariat for relevance through listing. Perhaps there should be an examination by the Protocol on the listing process to give it more substance. There should be a Working Group to discuss this subject to improve connectivity and species protection in more detail, and the Parties must do their part.
105. Ms. Pivard on behalf of the RAC, confirmed that a reevaluation of SPAW listed sites was to be conducted for the last biennium. However, this proved challenging and was not feasible due to lack of human and financial resources. Additionally, a draft form had to be designed for circulation and feedback from focal points which would have proven difficult without a dedicated platform. The suggestion was put forward to consider creating a forum over the next few days, to share the evaluation document of the sites (taking into account what had been discussed thus far) or any other documents dedicated to the working groups. From this a report could be generated for presentation at the next STAC thereby improving dynamics.
106. The delegate of France agreed with issues raised regarding feedback from focal points and supported the remarks by the DR on the management of MPAs. France for its part, had continued efforts to create protected areas and felt it was important to move to a new level in developing these areas, especially within the framework of the Protocol.
107. Ms. Lopez recalled that the scope of the Protocol clearly outlined the process for the establishment and designation of protected areas (Article 6 in particular). This was an important reference to ensure that focus was maintained regarding what was required by Parties.
108. The delegate of the Netherlands supported this point. He cited the example of the Netherlands and how the listing process was facilitated along with oversight and management for these protected areas – generally difficult for small island states dealing with migration. The intervention from the US highlighting the need for networking along with the challenges faced by managers further emphasized the importance of the ToT.

AGENDA ITEM 5: PROTECTED AREAS PROPOSED BY PARTIES FOR LISTING UNDER THE SPAW PROTOCOL

109. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat and the SPAW-RAC, as coordinator of the Working Group on the assessment of the protected areas proposed for listing, to report on the proposals presented by Parties, as per information contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/4 and following Decision 5 of the SPAW COP9 (Cayenne, French Guiana, 13 March 2017).
110. Ms. Pivard provided a brief background of the Protocol and relevant achievements in the listing of PAs. COP5 (2008) and COP6 (2010) saw the *Adoption of Guidelines and Criteria for the Evaluation of PAs* to be listed under SPAW, and the *Adoption of a reporting format* respectively. Following COP6 a web-based tool was developed according to the reporting format for optional on-line preparation and submission of reports by Parties for monitoring by the RAC. A dedicated database was developed for compiling and storing the data from reports and generating statistics and analysis of the listed PAs.
111. The thirty-two (32) PAs currently listed under the Protocol contributed to marine and coastal biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean alongside the launch of the Cooperation Programme for listed PAs in 2014. Many managers were members of CaMPAM which facilitated capacity building through training, peer-to-peer exchanges, and small grants programme. The current situation reflected limited resources over the past two (2) years - efforts were ongoing to identify collaboration and fundraising for the new biennium.
112. An overview of the distribution of PAs by surface coverage was provided with the marine area (including the Agoa Sanctuary) accounting for the highest total. Most areas were financed through public funding (e.g. government, public institutions) followed by park fees and an updated map of all SPAW listed sites was produced during the biennium. There were several sites with international designations (e.g. World Heritage, Biosphere Reserve, Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA)), however fourteen (14) had no designation.
113. The Meeting was invited to review the report and make recommendations to the COP10 for the protected areas proposed for listing from the Kingdom of the Netherlands (*the Mount Scenery National Park of Saba Island*) and the Government of France (*National Natural Reserve of Kaw-Roura and the National Natural Reserve of Amana in French Guiana*). A summary of the evaluation results was provided, and the RAC recommended that the Meeting have further discussion on improvements that could be considered regarding the process of the call for proposals (e.g. translation rules, update and re-endorsement of the Working Group) and more generally, how to maintain active communication between Contracting Parties inter-COP.
114. The delegate from France thanked the RAC for its presentation and the comments received from the group of experts who reviewed the proposals. He stressed the importance of the proposed areas given their rich biodiversity and as such qualified for listing under the Protocol. The Government of France was willing to provide detailed responses to the comments from the Working Group.
115. The delegate of Colombia expressed thanks to both the Government of France and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for their submissions. The challenge was that it would be difficult to address all the concerns raised, but Colombia endorsed the listing of these areas. She reiterated that the mandate rested with countries and Governments to manage these areas via management plans etc. In support of the intervention made by the US, a regional network was very important and Colombia itself though experiencing austerity, had continued to work vigorously to manage its three (3) SPAW listed sites.
116. The delegate of the Netherlands provided a summarized response to the feedback received from the review of the Mount Scenery National Park as the main criticism concerned the lack of a finalized draft management plan. This was a new area with an urgent need to submit it for listing, and so the Kingdom requested the indulgence of the Parties for the required/delayed management plan. There had been diligent efforts to ensure that at least one (1) terrestrial area was protected on each island, and when Saba requested the Kingdom's support in the process, albeit late, the decision was made to assist. A draft management plan addressing all the questions raised by the expert review had since been prepared and was currently being finalized for completion in a few months. It would be effectively implemented by a very capable NGO already involved in managing the area which included many hiking trails. Having the area as a national park was expected to

- increase resources for the area and would also mean oversight by the Netherlands regarding its monitoring and management.
117. The delegate of France was in favour of the area proposed by the Netherlands. He requested to address the issues raised by the experts regarding the areas submitted by France - 1) the traditional agriculture taking place in the reserve involved subsistence farming versus cash crops; 2) fisheries – there had been some illegal activities in the area concerning turtle egg harvesting and by the indigenous population from the Galibi village in Suriname. A decision had been made to sustainably harvest the eggs through controlled collection. The aim was to monitor these activities with respect to the native population that had been using the area for years which must be taken into account; 3) species of mangroves in the reserves had unique characteristics which could help to offset the impacts of climate change – wetland preservation was a challenge and there were a number of very important points on this that were not adequately captured in the English translation
 118. The delegate of the DR expressed frustration in reading the proposals following requests for the Spanish translation. The feedback from the experts appeared to focus mainly on the management, versus the ecological quality of the areas submitted. The focus moving forward, should be on how the overall management of these areas would respond to these issues as they were not unique to most protected areas. The DR supported the inclusion of these areas taking into account the responses for action provided by the group of experts.
 119. The delegate of the US, Mr. Cid, added that the main issue was with the timeline for submitting the proposals and requested that the Secretariat consider reviewing this. It was understood that there were challenges behind the scenes, but it was important to allocate sufficient time for translations and for the experts/Contracting Parties to review the submissions. Consideration should also be given to updating the expert list of the Working Group as review/input was received from only two (2) persons in some cases. The US would welcome being added as experts in this forum.
 120. The Chairperson invited feedback from the Meeting on the proposals made by the US.
 121. The delegate of France supported the proposal made by the US especially considering the length of the proposals and agreed that more time was needed for translations since the majority of Contracting Parties spoke English and Spanish.
 122. The delegate of the DR agreed with the extension of the expert list and the timeline for proposals. There should also be a review of the file format/conceptual framework used to better capture the information for submission. This would be helpful since the DR intended to submit a national park for consideration.
 123. The delegate of Colombia supported this proposal.
 124. The delegate of St. Lucia requested clarification on the Working Group proposal – was the request to expand the list or review the members the group. He gathered that the list was outdated and there were not enough experts to review the documents.
 125. Mr. Cid clarified that though he could not recall if there was a specific number required for the group, he was aware that some members (e.g. from the US) needed to be replaced/updated as they were now involved in other areas.
 126. The delegate of Aruba supported the decision to review the group of experts.
 127. The Chairperson enquired if delegates were in agreement with these two (2) proposals.
 128. The delegate of the Netherlands agreed with both proposals and it was understood that Parties would be asked to submit the name of their experts for inclusion in the Working Group to the Secretariat.
 129. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) supported the timely discussion and asked existing members of the group to explain the process and timing for submissions.
 130. Mr. Cid assumed that there was no existing procedure, so perhaps the proposal should be for strict guidelines on the timing, and if a proposal was submitted after the deadline, then it should be saved for the next Meeting.

- In the case of the Working Group, he could not recall if there was a set number or whether it was simply a group of persons who had volunteered - perhaps the Secretariat could offer insight on this.
131. The delegate of the Netherlands clarified the process for establishing the Working Group - the Secretariat asked Parties to submit the names of persons who could participate and there was no set number. If it was proposed to have two (2) experts per Party, then the group might be too big – it was best to keep it at one (1) person and within that, each country could have their own supporting experts.
 132. Ms. Pivard confirmed the process explained by the Netherlands and added that there were in fact guidelines for submission. Regarding translations, the first series of Meetings during the 2000s established English as the working language for the Working Groups. For these recent submissions, the RAC did translate the final working document produced from the Working Group review. She acknowledged the limited timeline to accomplish tasks and the Working Group was to be commended for their efforts to review the proposals in such a short time.
 133. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) acknowledged that there were various challenges with the Working Group which may need to be revisited and revised as this was a topic of discussion prior to the Meeting. Parties should also adhere to the strict timelines outlined for submissions. Perhaps as well there could be further dialogue on defining a proper process for establishing the group.
 134. The delegate of the US, Ms. Nunez, reminded the Meeting that under the Rules of Procedure, the Secretariat was responsible for ensuring that all documents were made available to Parties in the three (3) working languages.
 135. The delegate of Colombia reverted to the question concerning the establishment of the Working Group - given that there were two (2) proposals on this, the Secretariat should take the lead and develop a ToR as this was not the responsibility of the Contracting Parties. It was important to determine the next steps to ensure clarity considering other proposals submitted for species.
 136. The delegate of France in response to the issue of translation and the point raised by Ms. Nunez, noted the scale of financing provided by his Government to the Convention. As such it would be difficult to take on the duty of having the proposals translated into the other working languages and it should be the responsibility of the Secretariat to determine the best way to proceed.
 137. The Secretariat (Ms. Inniss) clarified that the proposals from countries were not submitted directly to the sub-programme as working documents, but to the RAC. On the contrary, the Secretariat was responsible for the translation of *working documents* which in this case was in the form of the report presented by the RAC (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/4) based on their evaluation and summary of the submissions.
 138. The delegate of the DR explained that he had referenced the report UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/4 which was not made available to Parties until very late, despite having requested it many times. It was not feasible to expect participants to review the actual proposals which were often hundreds of pages long. A review was therefore needed on the existing format for submissions to make it simpler and easier for members to review/complete – a challenge which he was currently experiencing in an attempt to complete the upcoming submission for the DR. The existing instrument was highly exhausting/exaggerated – it was recommended that a simplified/practical template be designed to effectively capture all the relevant information.
 139. Ms. Nunez requested clarification on what was being proposed - the delegate of the DR reiterated that there should be a review of *both* the criteria *and* the template for submission of proposals (however, if Parties were satisfied with the existing instrument then it should remain).
 140. The delegate of Colombia recommended that the Meeting carefully keep track of what had been discussed to ensure that points did not get confused. It was confirmed that the Spanish translation for the working document was made available very late and requested further feedback from the Secretariat.

141. Ms. Nunez thanked the delegate of Colombia for the excellent points and revisited the proposal for the structure of the Working Group – it would be good to have two (2) representatives, a main and an alternate.
142. Ms. Pivard reminded the Meeting that the current format was based on what was approved eight (8) years ago – all thirty-two (32) listed sites have used these criteria. Therefore, Parties could choose to review/revise this once more. Over the years, most of the proposals submitted were no longer than twenty (20) pages and more often than not, it had been possible to review in a timely manner. However, the amount of content provided was based on what the Parties chose to submit and understandably, it was easier to work on a shorter document versus one with hundreds of pages as was the case for some proposals.
143. Given the multiple interventions, Ms. Lopez suggested a consensus on the proposition to draft a ToR for the Working Group of experts for *both* protected areas and species. Existing deadlines for submissions would be maintained in keeping with the Rules of Procedure as any delays had a ripple effect impacting even the timeline for Meeting preparation. It was also indeed the responsibility of the Secretariat to translate main working documents – anything beyond that was difficult.
144. The delegate of Colombia reiterated the request for the Secretariat to have a preliminary ToR and recalled comments by the US on the importance of networking - the delegate of the Netherlands added that perhaps the ToR should address how this could be improved or incorporated
145. The Chairperson confirmed that the Secretariat would prepare the draft ToRs for presentation to the Meeting.
146. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) thanked the Meeting for its confidence and assured that all suggestions would be included in the ToRs, along with additional areas for consideration by the COP10.
147. The delegate of the US, Mr. Cid, supported the proposal made by the Netherlands on including connectivity. Indeed, the aim was to give countries a tangible reason to be a part of this process and make it meaningful.
148. In his capacity as Rapporteur, Mr. Hoetjes proposed working during the Meeting to prepare a draft for approval by the STAC and recommendation to COP10.
149. The delegate of France thanked Mr. Hoetjes for the proposal while stressing the need to address the pre-requirements that were mandatory for submitting proposals (the template and content were different things). It was best to tackle the subject of the template versus the content submitted, as the latter would require substantial work which might not be feasible during the Meeting.
150. This was endorsed by the delegate of Colombia - within the context of this Meeting, the time available would not be sufficient to review the ToR.
151. Mr. Hoetjes agreed and suggested that it be done intersessionally prior to the COP while volunteering to participate in the process on behalf of the Netherlands.
152. The delegate of France supported this intervention and volunteered to participate as well. The delegations of Columbia and the US also volunteered.
153. The Chairperson **confirmed the proposal from the Netherlands, supported by the USA, France, Colombia.**
154. The delegate of St. Lucia agreed with the proposal and expressed confidence with the members that had volunteered.
155. The Chairperson proposed that the Meeting endorse the PAs submitted by the Kingdom of the Netherlands - the delegate of France voiced agreement. **With no objections this was adopted.**
156. Ms. Vail recommended that the Secretariat in drafting the ToRS, recall the interest of NGOs/Observers, and consider including them in the process as they had played a very important role historically in assisting and supporting the Working Groups.

157. The delegate of the Netherlands agreed that it would be important for the Protocol to include stakeholders such as Observer in the process. When the species Working Group was originally developed, there was an agreement at the first STAC/COP to create a space for Observers with an appropriate template to facilitate this.
158. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez), recalled the policies used by all UN organizations which highlighted the importance of NGOs and Observers. As such, the Protocol welcomed the participation of its various stakeholders and would examine the margins of the procedures for the ToRs to determine this inclusion.

AGENDA ITEM 6: SPECIES PROPOSED BY CONTRACTING PARTIES FOR LISTING UNDER THE ANNEXES OF THE SPAW PROTOCOL

159. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to report on the work undertaken since COP9 and present the proposals submitted by Parties of species for listing under the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol
160. The Secretariat invited the SPAW-RAC Director the SPAW-RAC, as coordinator of the Working Group on the assessment of the species proposed for listing, to report on the work undertaken since COP9 and to present the proposals submitted by Parties of species for listing under the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol (contained in documents UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.40/3 and UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.40/INF.7).
161. Proposals for listing included:
- Two (2) shark species (*Pristis pristis* and *Carcharhinus falciformis*) respectively to be added to Annexes II and III of the SPAW Protocol, supported by the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
 - Four (4) shark species (*Rhincodon typus*, *Sphyrna mokarran*, *Sphyrna zygaena*, *Carcharhinus longimanus*) to be added to Annex II of the SPAW Protocol, supported by France;
 - One (1) species of manta (*Manta birostris*) to be added to Annex II of the SPAW Protocol, supported by France;
 - France also proposed the establishment of a dedicated Working Group whose objective is to prepare as a first step, a recommendation on parrotfish and if applicable, other coral herbivores, including their classification in Annexes II or III of the Protocol.
162. Ms. Pivard highlighted that following COP9 the Annexes of the Protocol were updated with the number of species currently reflected in the documents presented: Annex I - 53 plant species, Annex II - 116 species (including all sea turtles and marine mammals of the region), and Annex III - 43 plant species and 42 animal species.
163. A background and timeline was provided on the listing process which started with the COP6 (2010) (re-establishment of the Working Group to review the criteria for listing species in the Annexes of the Protocol), through to COP8 (2015) (circulation of Revised Guidelines and Criteria to the Parties), to most recently with the COP9 (2017) (addition of two (2) species to Annex II and ten (10) species to Annex III). Vascular plants accounted for the highest percentage of species listed by class (~33%), followed by mammals (~23%), birds (~20%), reptiles (~13%), and fish and reptiles (~ 3%). Invertebrates (e.g. corals, crustaceans and molluscs) comprised the remaining percentage.
164. A percentage overview of SPAW listed species according to their IUCN conservation status was provided with the majority (~30%) *not evaluated* (mostly under Annex I). *Least concern* accounted for 23.5% (mostly Annex III and II respectively), followed by *critically endangered* and *endangered species* both accounting for ~ 13% each (mostly Annex II and I respectively).
165. A review was presented of the twelve (12) species listed at the COP9, primarily Annex II and III, along with further details on the species proposed for presentation at COP10. A synopsis was given on the proposals by the Government of France for the establishment of Working Groups to **1)** address the decline in coral reef health throughout the WCR to prepare a recommendation on Parrotfish (and other coral herbivores) for listing

under Annexes II or III , and 2) [tackle the issue of Sargassum by gathering Parties concerned and which could be \(co\) facilitated by the SPAW-RAC or other body.](#)

166. The main comments by the experts of the Working Group on the new species proposed for listing highlighted: 1) critique of the quality, scientific robustness, and accuracy of cited sources; 2) issues regarding the application of the Revised Guidelines and Criteria; 3) overall matching of proposals with 2014 Working Group short list of priority species; and 4) mixed views toward the listing of proposed species, especially for removal of species from one Annex to another.
167. Concerning coral herbivores, the proposal was supported by experts with the Parrotfish mentioned as a “*species essential to maintenance of such fragile and vulnerable ecosystems/habitats as mangroves ecosystems, seagrass beds and coral reefs...*”, (Criteria 10). As such this should be adopted by one of the Parties as established by COP9. The proposal on Sargassum was also supported with the recommendation that the new Working Group connect to / closely collaborate with existing initiatives in the region and leadership spearheaded by the SPAW-RAC.
168. In closing, Ms. Pivard explained that the 2018 evaluation results of the proposals had very few reviews from the Working Group and it was recommended that there be further discussion during the Meeting towards a more unanimous decision for submission and approval by the COP10. There should also be dialogue regarding improvements that could be considered regarding the call for proposals process (translation rules, update and re-endorsement of the Working Group) and how to maintain active communication between the Working Group and the Contracting Parties.
169. The Meeting was invited to provide comments or interventions on the proposals and make recommendations (agreed species by species, followed by the proposed Working Groups) to the COP10 in 2019.
170. The delegate of the US, Ms. Chelsey Young, thanked the RAC for the report and its timely completion, and via the Working Group, recalled that there were only two (2) scientific evaluations and four (4) general responses. Noting the one (1) response for moving species from Annex III to II, the US did not believe there was sufficient scientific assessment provided to support this.
171. The delegate of Colombia extended appreciation for the efforts by the Kingdom of Netherlands and Government of France. She recalled that the proposals from France were discussed and reviewed in 2016 (STAC7), therefore there were no unexpected details on this subject. Colombia’s position in support of treaties such as [CITES](#) was reiterated.
- **Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*)**
172. The delegate of the Netherlands noted that Working Group comments were received only a few days before the Meeting and efforts were underway to provide the appropriate responses. Regarding refutation of some of the publications cited, this did not change the vulnerability of the species which have a high mortality rate and there is general agreement on its decline. Additionally, a population had been found recently on the Saba Bank which could be an important nursery and help to stabilize the population. It was therefore important to have it placed under Annex III.
173. The delegate of the DR voiced support highlighting his Government’s recent resolution prohibiting the capture of any sharks swimming in territorial waters/along the coast. It was relevant to note the struggle at the last CITES COP17 in South Africa to have species such as the silky shark included. Even with the critique by the Working Group, there was still consensus that the species should be listed under Annex III of the Protocol.
174. The delegate of Colombia supported the proposal and added that her Government had recently updated its red book on marine fish. Unfortunately, this particular species was one under discussion and efforts were ongoing to approve its inclusion and listing.
175. The delegates of France and Barbados endorsed the inclusion under Annex III.
176. **The Chairperson acknowledged no further objection - listing approved**

- **Largetooth sawfish (*Pristis pristis*)**
177. In response to review that literature was not up to date, the delegate of the Netherlands noted that though information submitted by the Kingdom focused on information specific to SPAW managed areas, there were no studies demonstrating that the species was improving under any circumstance. There was a subsequent publication prior to the Meeting which ranked this species as evolutionary distinct and globally endangered, and the Zoological Society of London ranked it at the top of the list as most in danger of extinction – this alone made it necessary to list this species under Annex II of the Protocol.
178. Delegations further supporting listing - **Colombia** (species was also included in the red book and agreed that the Meeting should recognize the declining status); **USA** (endangered under US domestic law); **Belize** (species virtually extinct in its waters – had not been seen or observed in over two (2) decades); and **France**.
179. The Observer from Sealife Law and Dalhousie University, Olga Koubrak, thanked the Secretariat for allowing the participation of her organization and cited a recent initiative through Shark Advocates International and Havenworth Coastal Conservation, which together with scientists engaged in Caribbean research, had focused on protecting sawfish in the region. Sealife strongly supported the proposal from the Netherlands as per the obligations under Article 11 which would benefit this critically endangered species. Such action was also timely as just prior to the Meeting, the sawfish was ranked number one (1) on the global list of Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) shark and ray species. Though once common in the Caribbean, both largetooth and smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) had declined significantly due to overexploitation (from bycatch and targeted fishing), as well as habitat loss. The Meeting was reminded that the smalltooth sawfish was added to Annex II at COP9 and remained in dire need of attention through basic legal protection in the relevant countries. It was hoped that with the addition of largetooth sawfish to Annex II, the Protocol could initiate much need collaborative efforts towards preventing extinction and promoting recovery of both species throughout the region.
180. **The Chairperson acknowledged no further objection - listing approved for recommendation to the COP.**
- **Smooth hammerhead (*Sphyrna zygaena*)**
181. The delegate of **Colombia** recalled discussions and the position of Colombia at the STAC7 which did not support inclusion under Annex II due to its artisanal use. Support for it to remain under Annex III as outlined by, and complementary to CITES.
182. The delegate of **Guyana** outlined that regarding all four (4) shark species, moving from Annex III to II would have implications on fisheries for Guyana.
183. Delegations further objecting - **Trinidad** (*as with Guyana, this would seriously affect local fishermen*); **USA** (*cited guidelines and did not think adequate scientific justification was provided*); **St. Lucia** (*as with Colombia recalled STAC7 deliberations. In taking note of the gaps and weaknesses presented in the summary from the RAC, and based on the review of the Working Group/expert panel along with importance to livelihood of artisanal fishers, did not support the move*)
184. **The Chairperson acknowledged no further remarks with the majority objecting to the move - therefore proposal was not approved.**
- **Great Hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*)**
185. The delegate of France elaborated that specifications for this species of hammerhead differed from the previous - it was considered globally endangered with a significant decline in population. It therefore faced the threat of extinction and was currently under Annex I of CMS. The concern for impact on artisanal fisheries/livelihoods expressed by the other delegations was acknowledged, however there should be adjusted considerations when a species was in danger of extinction.
186. The delegate of Colombia thanked France for the remarks while reiterating Colombia's equivalent position regarding inclusion under Annex II in line with CITES decisions which correspond to Annex III of SPAW.
187. Delegations in agreement with Colombia citing reasons as with prior species - **USA**; **St. Lucia**; and **Barbados**.

188. The Chairperson acknowledged the majority trend objecting to the move and invited a consensus that this would apply to the remaining shark species - oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*).
- **Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*)**
189. The delegate of the Netherlands conceded to the objections for uplisting the three (3) relevant species due to artisanal fisheries but appealed for an adjusted mindset for the whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) and manta ray (*Manta birostris*) for consideration under Annex II given their great economic value (e.g. whale watching).
190. The delegate of France thanked the Netherlands and added support for keeping these two (2) species under separate consideration (more so the whale shark as it was classified as globally endangered including under CMS/ IUCN). Though some scientific knowledge was lacking, it was considered both a key and flagship species with greater economic value through tourism compared to fisheries, and even more recognized than the giant manta and so should take priority for inclusion under Annex II. Recommended to have exemption to facilitate small scale artisanal fishing for the giant manta.
191. The delegate of the US (Ms. Young) expressed appreciation for the sentiments of France but maintained that scientific justification for uplisting a species was important, especially considering the strict requirements regarding the take of Annex II-listed species that must be adhered to by Parties. The US wished to focus on collaborative management strategies that could be developed under Annex III since these species were recently listed at the last COP - as noted in the guidelines, regional context and data was important to consider uplisting.
192. The delegate of Colombia in reference to the whale shark, supported France's request to uplist via consideration and measures for the species.
193. Delegations objecting - **Guyana** (*would require further in-country consultation*); **St. Lucia** (*after reviewing the proposals and comments from the expert panel, and as a scientific committee, noted that data submitted was limited for the Caribbean region in terms of population numbers and was therefore inadequate for listing under Annex II- recalled St. Lucia's support for listing under Annex III at STAC7 which was considered sufficient to manage the species*); **Grenada** (*present moratorium on commercial harvesting of all species of sharks and rays which posed a conflict*).
194. The delegate of the DR remarked on the ambiguity of the report from the reviewers which therefore made it difficult to use as a decision-making tool - on one hand it noted that population data in the region was incomplete/limited, while on another it stated that caution should be applied due to reduced numbers.
195. The delegate of France pressed for clarification on what could legitimately prevent the Meeting from agreeing to uplist the whale shark. Acknowledged the issues with artisanal fishing for the hammerhead, but these did not apply to the whale shark as it was understood that there was no fishing of the species in the region.
196. The delegate of Guyana reiterated position on the need for further in-country consultation.
197. The delegate of the US (Ms. Young) believed that the Meeting was losing sight of the reasons for classifying species in one Annex over another – she reminded that scientific evidence should support this request/provide appropriate justification, not based on whether a species was fished or not, as there were other forms of take that must be prohibited under an Annex II listing. The existing proposal did not provide sufficient data - considering the gravity of listing a species in Annex II and noting that the pre-cautionary principle should not be the sole reason to list a species – as such the US did not support the request for uplisting.
198. The delegate of the DR stated that it might not be useful/necessary to read the review of the experts since they were not consistent/ did not state a single position. In quoting a particular statement, he highlighted that it was inconclusive, and therefore did not believe the document could guide a specific decision on the species.
199. The delegate of France thanked the Meeting for all the diverse comments and provided additional points for considering the whale shark - **1)** closely resembled cetaceans and was therefore more vulnerable than other fish given slow maturity; **2)** ovoviviparous and similar to viviparous species in which there was internal fertilization with birth to live young; **3)** rather unknown species that we were just beginning to know more about. Therefore, a lack of significant scientific data did not mean it was not possible to use existing knowledge

- especially their confirmed slow maturity and sensitivity to threats in the tropics. Given their emblematic status and important role in ecosystem connectivity, if any other species should be considered outside of the sawfish, this should be the one.
200. The delegate of Barbados supported the uplisting based on these additional points raised by France.
 201. Ms. Vail provided a statement for consideration by the Parties taking into account the precautionary principle in tandem with good science and data which was the bedrock of US legislation by recalling the story of the critically endangered vaquita (a victim of bycatch from the international trade in totoaba swim bladder). The Meeting was encouraged to look ahead and pre-empt possible threats in the region for the whale shark which fell under the concept of precautionary principle (e.g. international trade in gill rakers - if not already happening).
 202. The delegate of the US (Ms. Young) clarified why scientific information was important to guide decisions for listing especially considering the socio-economic impacts for countries in the region. She stated that listing of the species under Annex III was adopted at the last COP in French Guiana (2017), and there had not yet been a chance to see how an Annex III listing might benefit the species. All the information for the whale shark, including its “endangered” status under the IUCN, was largely based on its status and threats in the Indo-Pacific where 75% of the population occurred. Indeed, one of the criteria for listing was to consider the regional context of the Protocol and how it would help conserve species.
 203. The delegate of the DR responded that this was why the experts had noted that the whale shark was a migratory species moving between waters. Therefore, the US legal framework was acknowledged, but it was the view of the DR that information available for the Indo-Pacific was sufficient under the precautionary principle. To say that we were awaiting further information might not be wise as it could be too late by the time we decided to act. As it appeared that the Meeting was going in circles, it was suggested that there be some consideration on a way to adequately protect species such as this, irrespective of the frameworks and requests for scientific information
 204. The delegate of France emphasized the application of the precautionary principle on the premise of limited scientific data for the species which made it even more critical to uplist before further reduction in population.
 205. Ms. Young thanked both delegates and acknowledged the points made. She proposed to hear more from the Parties - perhaps there were other options to explore as proposed by St. Lucia before considering uplisting.
 206. The delegate of the DR suggested that in the spirit of progress, the Meeting should work intersessionally on obtaining/compiling more information on the whale shark specific to the region via a dedicated Working Group. While still considering the points raised by France, it should be kept at Annex III until compilation of data in time for the next STAC.
 207. The Chairperson solicited feedback on whether to work on this during the Meeting - the delegate of the DR reiterated working intersessionally as there was simply not enough time.
 208. The delegate of France maintained his Government’s position and implored the Meeting not to be side-tracked by the information gaps outlined by the US, as by default, this concern would apply to all the other species. Working intersessionally would be difficult considering limited resources and would not improve/ add value to existing scientific data in such a short time. Listing under Annex II was the best option and a decision by way of vote would be proposed to hear from the other Parties.
 209. The delegate of Colombia endorsed the recommendation by the DR as the Meeting should avoid a repeat of STAC6 where work continued well into the morning (1am) in an attempt to reach a consensus. An intersessional Working Group was the way to go and Colombia would be willing to be member.
 210. The delegate of the US (Ms. Young) reiterated willingness to be part of the intersessional Working Group as an opportunity to gather more scientific information for the whale shark within the region. The Meeting was

- once more reminded on importance of the requirements outlined under the Annexes (particularly Annex III), and the magnitude of their application especially for species with limited data.
211. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) expressed appreciation for the productive discussion and clarified that voting did not generally take place under the operation of the Convention as per the specified Rules and Procedures – therefore proposed an amicable resolution possibly via creation of a small group which could meet during the CaribWen side event towards reaching a consensus.
 212. The Chairperson presented the proposition to the Meeting with the group comprised of the US, Colombia, St. Lucia, DR, and France
 213. The delegate of the US (Ms. Nunez) underscored that these countries (particularly Colombia and the DR) had already agreed to work intersessionally and it was now a matter of the Parties making a final decision.
 214. The delegate of Colombia reiterated willingness to be a part of the Working Group and would be further guided by the Secretariat on guidelines and procedures.
 215. The delegate of France welcomed the proposition of a small group to consider the thoughts of other delegates such as the Netherlands. The recommendations thus far (such as the creation of an intersessional Working Group), meant that there would be another two (2) year wait before being able to uplist the whale shark with no guarantee of having any further information of significance in such a short time. It was therefore best to vote to determine the position of all the Contracting Parties
 216. The delegate of Colombia requested clarification from France in making reference to STAC6 (2014) and the ensuing COP - the recommendations of the Meeting followed directly within the framework of discussion for the inclusion of the species and it was at the COP (*the following day*), that Parties requested a vote. This was important to clarify as in that case, the STAC and COP took place directly one after the other.
 217. The delegate of France thanked Colombia for these remarks and recalled that Annex III was designed to provide a balance between species and human activities, and the importance of ecosystem services provided by the ocean. This could be open to interpretation and in this context, there should be consideration for what was reasonable and in accordance with the survival of a particular species that could be threatened by fishing activities. It was proposed that the Working Group review available data and outline all possible advantages to support uplisting the whale shark. France (available to assist as part of its commitment), Netherlands, Barbados and Belize have all recognized the need to protect this species by moving to Annex II.
 218. The Observer from the Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA), Mr. Daniel Poo, endorsed the application of the precautionary principle in this particular case and recommended that the Meeting re-evaluate its assessment citing the example in Mexico where the whale shark was protected as a migratory species - consideration for impacts were applied in this regard
 219. Mr. Hoetjes thanked Colombia for recalling the details of STAC6/ensuing COP and added that voting would only result in a split opinion from the STAC to the COP, which should be avoided. As per France's recommendation, perhaps the Working Group (consisting of experts on whale sharks) could work intersessionally gathering as much data as possible specific to the region, and present their opinion for consideration at the COP10 a few months away.
 220. The delegate of the US (Ms. Young) requested clarification on the process being proposed and whether this would take place within the existing Working Group or as a side group. Additionally, would this add more information to the existing proposal.
 221. Ms. Pivard on behalf of the RAC reminded the Meeting that the current Working Group had given very little feedback and many members were no longer active/working in other positions. Proposal was to therefore work in parallel to establish ToR for the functioning of the group, then have the Parties nominate new members and provide more information on the whale shark using a central platform (taking into consideration the forty-two (42) days required for the document to be presented before the COP). As chair of the Working Group, the RAC would support this process and Contracting Parties or Observers could submit for further participation in this group via email.

222. The delegate of France acknowledged the recommendation by the Kingdom of Netherlands and the importance of having an active group that could exchange information virtually outside of the scope of the development of the proposed ToR. It might also be possible to find experts within the composition of this Working Group.
223. The delegate of Colombia redirected the discussion to the Secretariat for guidance on the procedure adding that the exercise suggested could take place leading up to the COP (not necessarily the one upcoming).
224. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) advised that based on the recommendation from the RAC, an interim/temporary group would be created to navigate this issue specifically. The drafting of the ToR for submission to the COP would follow separately in keeping with the need to update the existing Working Group.
225. Ms. Pivard confirmed the Secretariat's statement reiterating the specific desire to utilize a modern forum outside of just email which allowed persons to work within a live document (updated in current time), thereby helping to speed up final preparations leading up to the COPs.
226. On behalf of fellow Observers, Ms. Koubrak voiced support for the application of the precautionary approach and the proposal from France to move the whale shark from Annex III to Annex II. In reality, eliminating all scientific uncertainty might not be feasible or simply too costly. Attention was called to the workshop organized by researchers from Venezuela and Mexico held at the 2018 Latin America and Caribbean Congress for Conservation Biology. The workshop focused on the opportunity to use the highly migratory whale shark as a flagship species for conservation across Latin America and Caribbean. The Meeting was reminded of the option to reach out to universities currently conducting research that might provide valuable information without the need for reinventing the wheel.
227. Ms. Young acknowledged the dialogue and reiterated US support for strengthening cooperation for species already listed under Annex III and willingness to work with France and any other Parties interested in the species Working Group to help strengthen the implementation of existing listings. For example, after the US proposal to list the Nassau grouper under Annex III was adopted at the COP9 in French Guiana, the very next year the US funded a workshop that brought together stakeholders, scientists, fishermen, researchers, academia, etc. to come up with a regional strategy for the conservation of spawning aggregations with the grouper as a focal species. She emphasized this was an example of the kind of collaborative effort which could be applied for species under Annex III.
228. The delegate of the Netherlands thanked the US for this intervention and while understanding these points, the argument that the whale shark did not have sufficient scientific data to support uplisting was invalid. The creation of a group of experts comprised of countries with the species and that could provide valuable data on their respective areas could be very useful and applicable serving as an extension of the current document.
229. The delegate of France thanked the Meeting for feedback thus far which reflected good evidence to support uplisting the whale shark, therefore if not possible for this STAC, formal recommendation made to move it to Annex II.
230. The delegate of St. Lucia asserted that headway was being made but the Meeting was still moving in circles. He thanked the US for guidance on a similar scenario with options for consideration while reiterating that listing should not be simply for the sake of listing. He recalled that interventions thus far had provided feasible actions that could be taken for the species currently listed under Annex III and supported the establishment of a Working Group to do further work on the whale shark submission. However, it was not realistic to expect completion of this work in time for COP10.
231. The Chairperson summarized the three (3) options put before the Meeting regarding the whale shark – 1) the species remains under Annex III; 2) uplist to Annex II; 3) create an intersessional Working Group for presentation to COP10.
232. The delegate of the US (Ms. Young) maintained that the whale shark should remain under Annex III and shared the sentiments of St. Lucia on submission of data in time for next COP – supported by the delegate of Guyana.

233. Mr. Hoetjes highlighted a fourth option whereby the STAC could decide that it was not possible to reach a consensus, communicate this to the COP and leave it to the COP to decide.
234. The delegate of France repeated the request to place whale shark under Annex II **or** creation of a Working Group in the spirit of compromise on a voluntary basis for decision by the COP (either is fine), **or** supported the suggestion made by the Netherlands to leave it to the COP (least favourable option).
235. The delegate of the DR highlighted that the Meeting was once again going in circles and it was prudent that the impasse be resolved intelligently without the need for Parties to keep repeating their positions. Under Annex III, protection of the species would be sustained while working intersessionally to prepare the report with information and additional data from the countries/their experts for presentation by the Secretariat as mandated the Parties to the COP – this approach would open the way for further discussion and move this matter forward.
236. The Chairperson queried whether there was a consensus based on the recommendation from the DR
237. The delegate of Colombia called attention to the example cited by the US on its proposal at the STAC6 for a species (Nassau grouper) that was not included in the Annexes – in this case the US presented the proposal following the format/with work from their experts and it was discussed by the Parties at the STAC and accepted at the ensuing COP9.
238. The Secretariat (Ms. Inness) supported the comments made thus far and pointed out that time available was not actually three (3) full months but in fact only forty-two (42) days in advance for presentation of the document according to the projected date for COP10. This would also include the need for translation (an additional two (2) weeks) making a total of four (4) to six (6) weeks – so perhaps presentation to the next STAC would be more realistic.
239. The delegate of the Netherlands added that at the STAC (6) in 2014 there was only one (1) day before the COP and it was not possible to provide any extra data, so therefore in this case, some data was better than none.
240. Ms. Vail was equally uncertain if more data would solve the problem and might convey a message to Parties such as France that they had not done their due diligence - intimated that perhaps expressions thus far were reflective of personal positions. She recalled the guidelines for listing and highlighted that based on this, the Working Group might not even be able to reach a consensus.
241. The Chairperson proposed that the delegates vote for the creation of a Working Group since the Meeting could not reach a consensus.
242. The delegate of the US, Mr. Marc Porter, requested clarification on whether the vote was for a Working Group in favour of what was/could be done to strengthen the listing of the species under Annex III, **or** to create a new Working Group.
243. The delegate of the Netherlands responded that the proposal was for a Working Group of experts on the whale shark and to assess the situation with the species remaining under Annex III **or**, would there be any merit to moving to Annex II.
244. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) thanked the Meeting for the passionate discussion outlining that the options for the whale shark were either maintaining listing under Annex III or uplisting to Annex II, and there was no consensus there. The other alternatives were 1) present to the COP for consensus or 2) go the route of the Working group with very little time to complete additional research.
245. The Chairperson thanked the Secretariat and presented the options for consideration by the Parties.
246. The delegate of the DR posed the question to France on the possibility for his government to do some work intersessionally for presentation of a valid argument at the COP for a decision given that the Meeting could

- not reach a consensus on moving this species to Annex II. This approach would also give delegations that have not been able to make consultations with their government (e.g. Guyana) extra time to do so.
247. The delegate of Colombia reiterated a third option which was to transfer the issue to the COP11 as there was a great possibility that the prior suggestions might not ensure the best result for some countries. France could consider this approach and solicit more information/research for presentation at STAC9/COP11(similar to what the US did with the Nassau Grouper).
248. The delegate of France thanked the DR and Colombia and agreed that his government could provide more information based on the guidelines provided by the Secretariat. In acknowledging the example cited by Colombia, consented to revisiting/considering this item later.
249. The US delegation endorsed the suggestion by Colombia on the basis that there was no need to rush this issue thereby putting pressure on Parties requiring additional time to provide supplemental information. This was clearly a matter that should be respected given the time invested to prepare submissions, and so France was encouraged to take the advantage of extra time to garner more data for presentation at STAC9/COP11. For this Meeting the matter should be recorded as no consensus.
250. The delegate of the Netherlands supported the proposal by Colombia and agreed that time should be taken to collect more data as there was a high risk of *no consensus* if rushed for presentation at COP10 – endorsed by the delegates of Belize and St. Lucia.
251. The delegate of France responded that in light of the willingness for commitment shown by majority of the delegations, his government accepted this compromise while maintaining stance that this represented a setback for the species considering the existing data available.
252. It was agreed by the Meeting to support the proposal of Colombia and stay the discussion for COP11.
253. The delegate of France thanked the Meeting for the proposals in the spirit of commitment confirming presentation of the whale shark at a later time - requested further assistance via the group of experts to assess the resubmission (based on Parties that agreed to participate earlier).
254. **Final consensus - whale shark to remain on Annex III.**
- **Oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*)**
255. The delegates of St. Lucia and Guyana maintained positions expressed earlier - not in a position to support the move from Annex III to II - also Trinidad and Barbados.
256. The delegate of Colombia thanked France for submission of the proposal noting other considerations and recommendations for the species in accordance with CITES - therefore could not support this move.
257. The delegate of the Netherlands voiced support adding that all Dutch territories had declared their waters as shark sanctuaries.
258. The Chairperson requested confirmation of agreement that the species remain under Annex III.
259. Mr. Hoetjes recommended that the Meeting use a mechanism similar to the whale shark via withdrawal of the proposal for resubmission at a later time since it appeared the discussion was leading down the same path.
260. Ms Nunez proposed another Working Group to examine this and resubmission at the STAC9 – opposed uplisting.
261. The delegate of Colombia posed the question on whether France would agree to the proposal from the Netherlands with consideration of earlier recommendations for presentation at STAC9/COP11.

262. Mr. Hoetjes clarified that he did not propose the creation of another group outside of the species Working Group but to withdraw the current proposal for resubmission at next STAC only if France was in agreement.
263. The delegate of France accepted the option of resubmission given that the existing proposal would not be accepted in full by the Meeting - additionally some delegations were not in agreement based on dependence on the fisheries. While highlighting that the case between both species was completely different (the pressures on the whitetip were due explicitly to fishing impacts), and understanding that there was sustained opposition, France would nonetheless maintain its proposal.
264. The Chairperson requested clarification on the intention of France - delegate responded that France would maintain its position leaving the STAC to bear the responsibilities of its decision and acknowledged that these species might have aspects pertaining to livelihoods/ fisheries resulting in the position of other Parties. However, France did not withdraw its position and would continue to maintain this right.
265. **The Chairperson recommended that the Meeting agree that there was no consensus and the oceanic whitetip would therefore remain under Annex III.**
- **Giant manta (*Manta birostris*)**
266. The delegate of France recalled that several nations spoke about the prohibition on fishing of this species and the creation of marine parks to protect them considering their sensitivity to anthropogenic pressures. They were also under Annex I of CMS and included in migratory sharks protected by regulations for these species. Given the highly migratory nature of the species and its symbolic role in generating income for tourism, it was considered an interesting idea to move this species
267. The delegate of Grenada reiterated his governments ban on fishing sharks and rays and acknowledged the impacts from boats and overfishing – supported the request as it would give the species all the help it could get.
268. The delegate of Colombia endorsed the request - ready to support inclusion under Annex II.
269. The US delegation expressed similar concerns (as with whale shark) on moving the manta from Annex III to II - highlighted the US Government had recently listed the manta as threatened but based on information in the Pacific region and issues there. There was currently very little information on this species in the WCR and so could not support the move between Annexes.
270. The delegate of the Netherlands suggested that perhaps this lack of data in the Atlantic was one of the main reasons that the Meeting should consider uplisting. There was a clear decline in numbers in the Pacific and a market for the species. As such, action should be taken before the same scenario played out in the WCR. From a tourism standpoint it was indeed an amazing flagship species and there would be no harm in moving it for stakeholders in the region while being guided by the precautionary principle.
271. The delegate of France voiced full agreement with the Netherlands reiterating that while very little was known about the species, it was a known fact that the species was on the decline.
272. The Chairperson queried whether there was a consensus to move this species.
273. The delegate of the US (Mr. Porter) while acknowledging the sentiment of Parties seeking a symbolic listing, was concerned that this would trigger real world requirements including legal enforcement – Parties would need to have the capacity to fulfil these obligations in keeping with valid scientific data - as such the US could not support this request.
274. The Chairperson put forward that there was no consensus - the species would remain until more scientific information was available so that it could be a part of a new proposal in keeping with the rules of the Protocol.
275. The delegate of France reminded the Meeting that several Member States and the expert group were focused on mechanisms to improve management of the manta ray and therefore due for consideration at the next STAC.

276. The delegate of the DR expressed concern that there seemed to be a selective bias on the premise of limited scientific information in the region – an issue for some species while bypassed for others (e.g. *Pristis pristis*). There appeared to be no coherence from the group of experts - why were some species uplisted and not others. The DR for example had some species of interest/consideration for uplisting but choose not to on this basis. At this point the discussion had become a tit for tat - this was not mentioned for the purpose of revisiting those species already agreed on by the Meeting but highlighted as there was a clear need for consistency.
277. The delegate of the US (Ms. Young) thanked the DR and explained the premise of feedback from the Working Group which was provided by only two (2) persons. The US for its part did provide scientific information that was more recent for *Prisitis prisits* and linked to populations in the WCR - and so indeed there was a difference in the level of information on these species outside of the reviews from the expert panel as the US had done its own research to support or oppose a decision on the subject.
278. The delegate of Grenada added that support for uplisting this species was based on the information available which verified that it was in fact in decline and as such, it was submitted that without protection it would not be around for future generations.
279. **Final consensus – the giant manta to remain in Annex III until more scientific information became available to support inclusion in Annex II. The group of experts would undertake this matter to improve the existing information.**
- **Parrotfish**
280. France was invited to make a presentation on the establishment of a dedicated Working group for the parrotfish whose objective was to prepare as a first step, a recommendation on the species and if applicable, other coral herbivores, including their classification in Annexes II or III of the Protocol. (see UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.7)
281. The delegate of the Netherlands supported this proposal and was of the view that it fell in line with the strategic action plan of the CLME+. If there was any hope to improve the resilience of coral reefs, then this was a necessary step considering the multiple threats - this was a simple step that could be requested of Member States. A Working Group could also work out the relevant arguments and recalled that the ICRI was a part of this initial discussion.
282. The US delegation also supported the proposal adding that coral reef ecosystems were heavily reliant on herbivorous fish species for their health.
283. The delegate of Grenada endorsed the proposal and suggested going a bit further – the problem should not just consider fishing of the parrotfish but also 1) predation by invasive species such as the lionfish; 2) run-off as a result of increased rainfall bringing excess sediments which smother reefs; 3) climate change which increased nutrient levels; and 4) ban on styrofoam and plastics and also manufacturing using microplastics which were flushed into these ecosystems. Therefore, a cohesive approach was needed considering all these other factors impacting coral reefs.
284. The delegate of Belize supported the proposal and offered to be a part of the Working Group highlighting that Belize saw a positive change stemming from its ban on the fishing on parrotfish. Since the ban in 2009, their reefs moved from 40% decline to an increase (especially in other grazers for which bans were implemented as well) - coral health index moved from poor to fair.
285. The Chairperson on behalf of Panama added support as part of any efforts to improve coral health. Though Panama did not have specific regulations concerning a ban such as this, they would be willing to be a part of this Working Group.
286. The delegate of St. Lucia thanked France for the proposal and expressed support for a Working Group to look into the parrotfish and come up with recommendations – aware that similar efforts had been proposed in other fora such as WECAFC and it was important to bring up some critical points on this subject. The points made

- by Grenada were acknowledged in relation to the many factors affecting the species including the invasive lionfish which fed on juvenile fish within coral reef ecosystems. The parrotfish was an important commercial species and food source for many Caribbean countries where artisanal fishing occurred - recommendation that the Working Group look not only at the ecosystem factors that affect parrotfish but also, consider a review on the state of the fisheries as a result of threats and other impacts from fishing techniques.
287. The delegate of Colombia thanked France for the proposal - supported it and would like to be a part of the Working Group. Returned the matter to the Secretariat for guidance on the rules and procedures for creation of these groups to ensure effectiveness.
288. The delegate of the DR in recognition of efforts in this area and timeliness of the proposal, agreed to the recommendations for the creation of this group recalling that similar to Belize, DR also had a restriction on the fisheries - endorsed the interventions from St. Lucia and Colombia that the study should also focus on impacts from coastal areas.
289. The delegate of France thanked the Meeting for its support and agreed that there were many other threats impacting reefs. However, France could not take on the responsibility of broadening this group to cover other aspects such as microplastics as it would prove too burdensome.
290. The Observer from AIDA, Mr. Poo remarked that after having heard all the positive feedback and appreciation for the status of the species, it was a pleasure to inform the Meeting of a current project to regulate and make sustainable use of parrotfish in LAC countries – this would encourage international collaboration and enable sharing of success stories. Parrotfish served an important ecological function not only providing scenic beauty to divers, but also sustaining coral reef health (of significance since this was one of the most important ecosystems accounting for over 25% of global biodiversity). In recognizing the potential impacts from climate change, a webinar was scheduled for experts/specialists to hold discussions on the species. Additionally, Mexico recently made decisions on management and regulate parrot fish banning the fisheries of Parrot Fish on Mexican Sea Caribbean Protected Area for a healthy reefs. Overall, it was indeed important to protect the species not only under the aspects of the Protocol but also from a human rights perspective.
291. The delegate of France thanked delegates for the remarks noting an issue that had not been addressed concerning the composition of the Working Group – consideration for NGOs to contribute to the group as well in addition to those Parties that had offered.
292. The Chairperson invited approval on the Working Group recommendations.
293. The delegate of the Netherlands requested clarity on the Working Group proposal – considering all the groups already in existence, suggested that it might be best to integrate them with subsets for discussions on specific species of a particular focus.
294. The delegate of St. Lucia clarified that whereas the establishment of the Working Group was applauded, as proposed by the Netherlands, a further clarification was needed on when the ToR for the group focused on parrotfish would be defined. Recalling St. Lucia's previous intervention, aside from the ecological perspective, there were socioeconomic components that required consideration (e.g. in relation to lionfish and those highlighted by the DR).
295. The delegate of Colombia reminded the Meeting of its mandated to provide recommendations to the COP to determine whether these would be formally accepted and reiterated request to the Secretariat for some outlines on the ToRs - initial drafts would be very useful.
296. The delegate of the US (Ms Young) thanked colleagues for comments and echoed support for the intervention by the Netherlands to revitalize the species Working Group and subsume the group for the parrotfish within this with a ToR drafted to outline relevant aspects. Taking advantage of this Working Group could also serve to strengthen existing species listed and improve collaboration for the protection of others.
297. The delegate of France expressed concern for incorporating the coral reef fish Working Group within the species group as original intent could get lost (recalled Working Groups from previous COPs which started out with good intentions only to fizzle out after a while). The aim here was to ensure maintenance of

- effectiveness and reminded the Meeting of earlier recommendation to add an agenda point for consideration. Supported Colombia and St. Lucia to prepare outlines of ToR which would be ideal to have for presentation at COP10 - there should be guidelines as provided by the Secretariat to ensure that the translation of the document could be facilitated in time. Proposed to have a concrete timeline for this overall process to prevent doing things at the last minute - important to prioritize the species in this regard.
298. The Chairperson once more invited response on the arguments put forward for approval of the parrotfish Working Group.
299. Ms. Lopez sought clarification on the anticipated role of the Secretariat and outlined for example, that the translation of the draft ToR would take approximately four (4) weeks, in addition to revitalization of the Working Group, followed by a roadmap concerning meetings for the parrotfish. All this would need to be considered by Parties in preparation for COP10 – if this was what was understood, then there was the potential risk of running out of time to have meaningful dialogue and presentations. Though it was easy to have a desired wish list, Parties should consider whether this was realistic - recommendation to form a *petit comité*.
300. **Delegations in agreement and support via participation – the Netherlands, US, France and Colombia.**
301. The Chairperson confirmed that there would be a small group for review of the ToR- considered approved by the Meeting
302. The delegate of St. Lucia interjected that there was no objection to formation of the Working Group, but clarification was still needed on the procedure as espoused by Colombia. Thus far it was agreed that 1) the group would be established for presentation and consideration by the COP; 2) ToR would be submitted for the Working Group; and 3) some members had expressed interest in being a part of the group for development of the ToR. The question was therefore if other members would have a chance to look at the outlined ToR before submission to the COP.
303. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) confirmed that the ToR (including relevant background for consideration) would be prepared for review by the Parties as information documents prior to the next Meeting – priority would be placed on having this ready in time for presentation and translation.
304. The Chairperson invited the Government of France to speak on the proposal for simplified procedure for species listed.
305. The delegate of the US (Ms. Nunez) interjected a pause/ a step back as it would appear that this was a request to include something that did not fall under the original agenda (citing Rule 12 and 16 for official request to amend the agenda). Recalled the rules specific to the request to revise a format approved at the last COP and the substantial time spent on this. The US was therefore not in agreement with adding this agenda item and proposed to include for consideration at the next COP.
306. [The delegate of France thanked Ms. Nunez and reminded of the request at start of meeting to include this agenda item](#) - this was accepted.
307. The delegate of Colombia recalled the proposal by France and clarified her delegation's response that there would not be enough time to review this as it would require going back to the Government of Colombia for further consultation.
308. Ms. Nunez endorsed Colombia's point and noted that the Chair had decided to move the item for discussion at this juncture, but not to add it for inclusion as an official agenda item.
309. The delegate of France responded that if delegates were not in a position to make a decision at this time then this was not a problem – suggestion at this point would be for the establishment of a Working Group to facilitate review of the proposal with a simplified option so as to have an optimized procedure for specific cases. The Meeting had already requested much from France regarding revision of its proposals submitted for species – if decisions were delayed for two (2) additional years, some of these species might have already

disappeared. Further examination was needed on the conditions surrounding the decisions to protect these species e.g. with the aid of this optimized procedure.

310. The delegate of the DR thanked France for considering an expedited mechanism for some species that were endangered but agreed as well, that his delegation was unprepared for this proposal. There was no meaningful document to guide discussions considering that there was an established template. Though the spirit of the recommendation was acknowledged, it required a more focused document for presentation to facilitate adequate consultation - therefore difficult to support a request of this nature.
311. The delegate of Grenada quoted the saying “*while the grass is growing the horse is starving*” – elaborated that if there was serious intent to protect the species, then it was possible to find a way to bypass these procedures while working collectively.
312. Ms. Nunez highlighted that the Meeting appeared to be entertaining a debate on the subject despite objections and endorsed the statement by the DR. Noted the proposal to use the IUCN red list template (no time to facilitate during this Meeting) and France’s recommendation for the creation of a Working Group which did not require a decision by the STAC - further clarification was needed on procedure at this point.
313. Mr. Hoetjes as Rapporteur recalled the earlier intervention made by France and acknowledged that though this item was appointed for discussion this was not the appropriate forum.
314. The delegate of France referenced the intervention by Grenada and reiterated that any steps which could facilitate protection was important. The Working Group could aid in reviewing this process and optimize the existing procedure while making proposals for the next STAC (focus on the procedure for the PA Working Group as it related to protecting biodiversity).
315. Ms. Vail supported the remarks by the Rapporteur in clarifying the roles of the STAC and COP – therefore the Meeting could agree to have the Working Group examine a mechanism to streamline the listing process for decision by COP10 and presentation at the next STAC.
316. The delegate of Colombia supported the recommendation to have the Working Group discussions within established parameters – this approach would safeguard France’s proposal.
317. Ms. Nunez thanked France for its clarification and supported a Working Group discussion.
318. **The Chairperson confirmed that a Working Group would discuss simplification of the listing process for presentation at the next STAC – adopted.**

AGENDA ITEM 7: CONTRACTING PARTIES REPORTS FOR EXEMPTIONS UNDER ARTICLE 11(2) OF THE SPAW PROTOCOL PROPOSED BY THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP

319. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the United States Exemptions Report (2017) (contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40 /INF.9) for consideration by Parties based on the “Draft Reporting Format for Exemptions under Article 11(2) of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol (SPAW)” (contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/3 Rev1). The document reflected the voluntary format proposed by the Working Group since its re-establishment following Decision 4 of the SPAW COP8 (9 December 2014), and Decision 6 of the SPAW COP9 (13 March 2017) respectively (*which included a proposal for exemption from the Government of Curaçao as case study on the format*).
320. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) requested the Government of the US to make the presentation on its Exemptions Report.
321. Ms. Young presented an overview on development of the report (following format agreed at COP9) which exceeded the reporting obligations of the United States under Article 11(2) - to ensure that the report would

- be ready for submission the decision was made to report exemptions for the calendar year (January 1 – December 31, 2017). An outline was provided of current laws and instruments in place to protect species listed under Annex II (particularly via the Endangered Species and Marine Mammal Protection Act). Permits and exemptions based on narrow and well-defined issuance criteria could be issued for otherwise prohibited activities through these two (2) legal mechanisms specific to non-federal entities and federal agencies respectively. Permits could also be issued for scientific research purposes or to enhance the propagation or survival of endangered or threatened species (e.g. fourteen (14) issued in 2017).
322. Weblinks to these permits providing all requested information in the voluntary reporting form were included. This was in addition to information relevant to Annex II listed species in the Convention Area regarding any *Incidental Harassment Authorizations* (IHAs) - for activities that result in non-lethal “harassment” only; and *Letters of Authorization* (LOAs) - for activities that result in harassment only *and* are planned for multiple years OR may cause serious injury or mortality.
323. The Chairperson thanked the US for the presentation and requested the cooperation of the Meeting to move quickly through the agenda by being mindful of interventions.
324. Ms. Lopez thanked the US and delegates were further requested to refrain from repetitive comments and follow the agenda to ensure recommendations could be presented in a timely fashion. Remarks were invited on the presentation.
325. The delegate of Colombia thanked the US Government for the report and the work accomplished. Requested some clarity from the Secretariat on this recurring/complex issue concerning the exemptions format which was finalized at the last COP (recalled the Curaçao scenario). The Meeting was reminded that **1)** the voluntary report submitted by the US regarding exemptions was granted in 2017 by its federal agencies; **2)** request made for the Secretariat to clarify or refute what was inferred by Colombia based on the foregoing; and **3)** requested that the Secretariat elaborate on the characteristics of both cases (i.e. Curaçao and the US) and, in particular, the scope of the ‘exemption request’ by Curaçao and whether feedback was expected from the STAC or the Secretariat as it was not a mere notification.
326. Ms. Lopez summarily agreed with all statements by Colombia highlighting that there was no room for discussion as the procedure had been clearly stated and reflected just as the US had done. Indeed it was agreed that Parties were encouraged to utilize the format, however, it was important to ensure that before a report was cleared at the national level, that it first be shared for consideration.
327. Mr. Hoetjes recalled that the Protocol stated that Parties were to report exemptions to the STAC which would then assess their pertinence. The US was commended for the initiative and all Parties were encouraged to follow suit (the Netherlands intended to do so for the next STAC).
328. The delegate of Colombia explained that the discussion thus far was precisely why guidance was requested on how to interpret the procedure - the matter was discussed several times at previous Meetings and there was an ongoing need for clarification.
329. Ms. Young thanked the Chair and added that it was understood that the reporting of exemptions was not voluntary *as per quoted guidelines* – however, the format for reporting exemptions was voluntary.
330. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) thanked the US and outlined the two (2) elements under discussion - 1) the context of the Protocol as per quoted guidelines under Article 11; and 2) the reporting format for exemptions. As this was the interpretation thus far the Secretariat craved the indulgence and confirmation from the Parties as to whether it was on the right track.
331. Mr. Hoetjes suggested as a way forward, that all the Working Groups (including the one on exemptions) consider review of the submission by the US and make an assessment according to what was pertinent as it was not possible to do this at the STAC.

332. Ms Young thanked the Netherlands and clarified that the STAC was expected to make recommendations of pertinence to the COP and was therefore not sure if a Working Group would be appropriate – requested further elaboration.
333. Mr. Hoetjes corrected that the Working Group did not determine pertinence but could review and report findings to the next STAC to make a decision.
334. The Chairperson confirmed that the US was in agreement with the Netherlands – US agreed that a Working Group could review the report to determine pertinence for STAC9.
335. **No further interventions/objections - considered approved.**
336. Ms. Vail highlighted that in considering the positive examples of Curaçao and the US to offer data regarding their exemptions for review, it was necessary to emphasize the importance of this information in enabling the Protocol to assess regional and cumulative impacts, especially for migratory species which crossed boundaries and were co-managed under different national policies. It was impossible to address exemptions without including reporting and compliance (which by virtue of being ‘voluntary’ also served as a barrier to communication). The Meeting was reminded that the process was not meant to be condemning or accusatory, but offered an avenue in the spirit of maintaining the integrity of the Convention, to assist in evaluating threats in the region (something being attempted under the SOCAR and CLME+ process) via the sharing of data that could help assess the true *State of the Caribbean*. The agenda had enabled discussion on the listing of species and protected areas which also had reporting requirements and at their core, the outputs were the same - data and reporting.
337. She added that as a long-standing Observer who had participated in the arduous process to establish and clarify the various reporting requirements and adoption of common guidelines within the Protocol, there was a concern for its future integrity. Reporting requirements were engrained within the Articles 11, 19, and 21 of the Protocol and were also required in the Marine Mammal Action Plan as part of a holistic strategy adopted by Parties in 2008. Data collection, reporting and review fuelled the intersessional Working Groups tasked with evaluating the listing of species - this supported the ability of Member States to determine the health of their migratory populations (e.g. whales, dolphins, sea turtles) and ecosystems. The Meeting was therefore encouraged to take action and report activities which undermined the intent and effectiveness of the Protocol. Data that was readily available in the public domain suggested that most Parties were missing opportunities to provide data critical to the protection of habitats and species. Some of this information revealed that listed species were being hunted (e.g. migratory species under Annex II upon which some member states’ tourism depended such as whale watching). In keeping with the forthcoming COP10, the Meeting was asked to consider a renewed and vigorous call and recommendation for increased reporting by Parties in order to effectively support the assessment of the Protocol’s impact in the Region.
338. Ms. Koubrak endorsed the comments of Ms. Vail highlighting that there were many stakeholders on the ground supporting the protection of species and it was important to ensure that they did not become discouraged by lack of action on the part of the Protocol.
339. The Observer of the UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project, Ms. Sherry Heileman supported these sentiments. It was noted that a monitoring and evaluation framework ([Strategic Action Programme \(SAP\)](#)) was being developed under the CLME+ project. The SAP had been endorsed by more than twenty-five (25) countries in the region and was a robust framework for addressing many of the issues facing the region (e.g. overfishing, pollution). On behalf of the project thanks were extended to the Secretariat for the immense work and partnership on this initiative (as representatives of UN Environment which served as co-executing partner). The project was working in collaboration with various agencies to produce several *State of ... Reports* on the environment and associated economies/mechanisms for assessment, the marine environment, and habitats and biodiversity (the workshop on Monday was towards production of the latter report). Project outputs specifically called for the establishment of these monitoring and reporting mechanisms – this therefore provided an opportunity to renew calls for countries to report on species, habitats and biodiversity to determine whether the Protocol was having an impact/ achieving its objectives so that improvement could be made if necessary.
340. The delegate of the Netherlands thanked the Observers for these points and noted issues requiring attention particularly as it related to Contracting Parties that persisted in allowing the killing of hundreds of cetaceans

- a year (in some cases allowing hunting of endangered sea turtles). As a STAC, a decision was needed on this with a recommendation formulated to the COP for countries to report any infractions in contravention of the Protocol and justify why this should be considered for exemption.
341. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) acknowledged these concerns and serious consideration would be given to address this. A Meeting should not be convened every two (2) years without taking into account the very important role it played in the preservation of nature.
342. The Chairperson invited the Government of Curaçao to present an update on its exemption as requested at COP9.
343. The delegate of Curaçao, Mr. Faisal Dilrosun, provided an overview recalling that Curaçao law required outcomes and feedback from the STAC *prior* to undertaking the exemption as per its report in 2016 which reflected plans to create a new harbour pier. This was to be offset via the establishment of a marine park with funding provided for its management. A government decree to establish the marine park had been signed but had to be withdrawn due to conflict with a private landowner in the area. Progress had since been made with the approval of the decree which was now at the governor awaiting signature.
344. The Chairperson thanked Curaçao for the presentation and invited recommendations for approval at COP10.
345. The delegate of the DR commented that Curaçao had been complying satisfactorily by submitting all required documentation and was therefore satisfied with update.
346. The US delegation requested some further clarification as per COP9 where there was a submission using the draft format - pertinence was not being examined at that point. Therefore, was Curaçao's presentation simply an update or would it be submitted to the Contracting Parties for review.
347. The Chairperson invited Curaçao to clarify – Mr. Dilrosun recalled that the exemptions report was sent formally to the Secretariat with the request for a review by the STAC7. Thereafter a response was received from the Secretariat to fill out the draft form which Curaçao completed and submitted twice – one as a formal letter, and the other as draft form.
348. The delegate of the Netherlands offered follow-up remarks adding that at the STAC7 (Miami) where the report was submitted, the request was for the STAC to consider pertinence and report to the COP. Curaçao had asked several times for the report of the Working Group (on exemptions) and so perhaps feedback from one of its members would be useful.
349. Ms. Vail responded that the Working Group was not convened, and had not been active – as such there had been no assessment
350. The Chairperson requested confirmation that the Meeting would be willing to take the Curaçao exemption into account.
351. The delegate of France expressed concern regarding Member States who did not respect obligations under the Protocol and were selective in complying with some aspects while ignoring others. Exemptions should be reported no matter the scenario, and thanked Curaçao and the US for their decision to do so. It would appear that the decision emanating from the COP9 concerning the work done by Curaçao had not been executed – recommended that this could be placed on the agenda of the species Working Group.
352. The Chairperson noting no further comments recommended that both reports be accepted for consideration at next STAC.
353. The delegate of the US (Ms. Young) clarified that upon revitalization of the Working Group for exemptions this was where the assessments should remain - endorsed by the delegate of France (*intent was to reference this Working Group*).

354. Ms. Vail supported this and confirmed that very few original members remained for the current Working Group and there was a lot of work to be done. The call for resuscitation of these groups should be strengthened as there was no point to persons volunteering without willingness to do the work required.
355. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) thanked Ms. Vail and agreed that inactivity of the Working Group was a mutual concern and efforts would be made within the Secretariat to determine ways to address this.
356. The delegate of the Netherlands recalled earlier recommendation calling on Contracting Parties to report on/and justify their exemptions so that the STAC could review and determine pertinence – requested seconding so that it could be formally considered by the COP.
357. **Seconded by the US and France** (noting that the French translation of the voluntary format was not very good, and this would need to be revisited).
358. The delegate of Curaçao added support for the proposal by the Netherlands with a point of clarification – there were some serious infractions of the Protocol under Article 11 (2) by Parties, and so wondered whether exemptions reports should still be submitted to the STAC as it related to the scientific research of Annex II species.
359. The delegate of the US (Ms. Young) responded affirmatively that “take” for scientific purposes was one of the three (3) categories of activities for which exemptions could be authorized under Article 11(2). In fact, scientific research and enhancement of survival permits made up the bulk of exemptions in the US report – other Parties were encouraged to do the same.
360. The delegate of the DR commented that in review of the relevant points from COP9, the Secretariat would need to revisit the wording of the format as the use of the term *voluntary* was misleading. In particular it was concluded that there would be a Working Group to address this which did not happen.
361. Ms. Pivard admitted that all the discussions during COP9 confirmed that the format template was not compulsory. However, Parties were encouraged to use it to provide all relevant information and in fact, this was a necessity in accordance with when Parties ratified the Protocol – it functioned as an important reporting tool which was critical under the aspect of compliance. Indeed, the recollection of the Netherlands was correct according to what played out at the previous STAC.
362. The delegate of the DR established that it was now clear that the format was in fact voluntary, however, Parties could opt to report in another way using an alternate mechanism (despite the fact that quite a lot of time was dedicated at the last STAC to develop this format).

AGENDA ITEM 8: WORKPLAN AND BUDGET OF THE SPAW SUBPROGRAMME FOR THE 2019-2020 BIENNIUM

363. The Chairperson invited Ms. Lopez of the Secretariat to present the “Draft Workplan and Budget of the SPAW Subprogramme for the 2019-2020 Biennium” (contained in document UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.40/5), prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of the recommendations of previous STAC and COP Meetings, as well as on the outcome of activities of the 2017-2018 Workplan for SPAW and other relevant emerging regional and international issues.
364. Ms. Lopez reminded the Meeting on the areas under *Programme Coordination* and provided an overview of projected expenditure which covered salaries and support to be raised for STAC9/COP 10- this also included funding from France through the SPAW-RAC, and from the CLME+ project.
365. *Strengthening of Protected Areas* involved continuation of the ToT and small grants programme (e.g. continued development of the MPA Cooperation Programme via finalized proposal between CEP and OSPAR on MPAs (2019-2023) and participation in the European Commission’s transatlantic project on MPAs). Improvement of CaMPAM’s internet forum and website effectiveness along with expansion of the MPA database would be a priority. Funding would be provided by the EBM project, along with support from France through the SPAW-RAC and other sources.

366. *Guidelines for Protected Areas and Species* addressed the call for applications to update the lists for protected areas and species while also encouraging Parties to use the voluntary reporting format. Avenues would be explored to source in-kind support from partners to raise additional funds to assist Parties with the listing process and formulation of exemptions reports.
367. *Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species* would focus on **1)** marine mammals (e.g. coordination of the CARI'MAM project, development of transboundary cooperation/marine mammal monitoring efforts to address data gaps identified during the LifeWeb project, and support for sustainable Marine Mammal Watching/promotion of best practice guidelines); **2)** sea turtles (e.g. support elaboration/ implementation of Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans (STRAPs) and continued promotion of standard guidelines/criteria for monitoring at nesting sites); **3)** invasive species through support for regional efforts with relevant partners (particularly the lionfish invasion); **4)** illegal trade of species in collaboration with CITES and UNODC; and **5)** Sargassum (e.g. development of a cohesive regional strategy, dissemination of public awareness information and data sharing). Funding would include in-kind contributions from partners such as [SBNMS](#), the Centre for Coastal Studies and Whale and Dolphin Conservation, and from France through the SPAW-RAC (the CARI'MAM project).
368. *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine and Coastal Ecosystems* would focus on **1)** coral reefs (e.g. continued reactivation of the Caribbean coral reef monitoring network under GCRMN-Caribbean, and promotion/implementation of the regional guidelines for Coral Reef biophysical monitoring); **2)** outputs under the CLME+ project via development of a regional strategy and action plan, and implementation of pilot projects demonstrating the transition to an EBM approach at the sub-regional/site level in the CLME+; **3)** the BEST Initiative to support conservation of biodiversity in overseas countries of the European Union; and **4)** wetlands and mangroves in collaboration with the Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative (Cariwet), with promotion of mangrove conservation managed by the SPAW-RAC subject to funding availability. In addition to funds from the CLME+ project, and France via the RAC, additional support is anticipated from UN Environment.
369. The Meeting was invited to review the draft Workplan, prioritize activities, and make recommendations to assist with its finalization prior to being adopted by SPAW COP10, the Eighteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme, and Fifteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, tentatively March 2019, respectively.
370. The participants were also invited to complement the information on the proposed SPAW Workplan recommending synergies with other relevant projects, as well as potential sources of funding and support.
371. The delegate of the DR congratulated the Secretariat on accomplishing so much in spite of the financial difficulties/limitations and having to work with Parties far away. In comparing previous reports with the current one, it was noted that there were some existing vacancies to be filled for this biennium (page 3), however, in comparing salaries from the previous biennium there was a significant increase in the amount (page 6) – requested some clarity on this. In reference to the project on mangroves and wetlands (page 20), the DR wished to reiterate a pause on its current project due to challenges with Ramsar resulting in a delayed start – this was important to note given close linkage with aspects of the Protocol.
372. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) explained the disparity in salaries – during the biennium a consultant was hired to function as temporary Programme Officer along with staff changes at the RAC which affected figures in this regard (requested RAC Director to comment further). The work being done by the DR on wetlands and mangroves was acknowledged.
373. Ms. Pivard clarified that for some time there were limitations on recruitment and though funds were available they could not be accessed. The RAC was now in a better position to hire and return to its previous level.
374. The delegate of France thanked the Secretariat for its work and added more details concerning the funding of the (3) positions within the RAC by the Government of France. Parties were thanked for

paying their annual fees and those in a position to make contributions were encouraged to continue doing so.

AGENDA ITEM 9: EMERGING ISSUES

375. The Chairperson invited the Meeting to consider relevant emerging issues such as those relating to the Sargassum influx. The Secretariat presented the document “Sargassum White Paper - Sargassum Outbreak in the Caribbean: Challenges, Opportunities and Regional Situation” (contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.8).
376. Ms. Lopez outlined the current regional situation with the severity of the Sargassum outbreak varying across the region. The most impacted areas included the Lesser Antilles, the DR, Turks and Caicos, Florida and Southeast Mexico. Other countries in Central America, northern South America, Cuba, Haiti and the Bahamas had seen minimal to no impacts from the influx. Countries utilized the seaweed in various ways (e.g. most commonly as fertilizer, animal feed, biofuel). For the survey, it was found that 23% of the territories reporting a significant influx were not utilizing Sargassum which represented not only a missed opportunity, but also an additional environmental issue from landfill disposal.
377. Of the nineteen (19) territories experiencing a significant influx, 42% actively tracked landings through field surveys or informally with no standardized procedure. Martinique had the most advanced system using satellite, airborne surveys, a camera network, and consistent monitoring of toxic gas levels. It was anticipated that territories most advanced in tracking technology would share their expertise, as there was an overall need for increased improved tracking systems across the Caribbean to evaluate and minimize the impacts of Sargassum.
378. The Meeting was also asked to consider the proposal by the Government of France for the establishment of a Working Group on the Sargassum influx (contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.8. Addendum 1).
379. The delegate of France thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and verified that efforts for collaboration with the territories of Martinique and Guadeloupe were being addressed including consultations with other countries in the region such as the DR. France would also be hosting an international summit on scientific knowledge and ongoing practices to which Parties were invited highlighting that this was a phenomenon affecting the other side of the Atlantic (Africa). Member States were invited to indicate an interest in being a part of the Working Group.
380. The Secretariat (Ms. Lopez) thanked Chair and offered additional consideration concerning the OECS meeting in June (2018) where the issue took centre stage and the Secretariat was called upon to make a presentation. [CARICOM heads also met in Jamaica \(Montego Bay, July 2018\)](#) and highlighted the challenge faced by many Caribbean countries. Several Member States from Latin American had also expressed concern in dealing with this problem.
381. The delegate of Grenada recalled a presentation concerning Grenada’s Sargassum issue at a previous UNEA meeting. It was noted that persons along the coast had developed health issues as a result of the influx - stemming from a meeting in Tokyo (June 2018) with the health minister, representatives visited Grenada and met with the government and members of the (Ministry of Marine Resources) where it was agreed that a technical team would be sent to further assess and analyse the Sargassum issue. Recommended therefore to have some sort of synergy and merging of resources – proposal to French Government to work with Grenada to prevent duplication of efforts. The influx was currently having a great impact on Grenada’s tourism and clean-up was costly accounting for much of the previous annual budget.
382. The delegate of Curaçao congratulated France on the time invested and applauded efforts for the development of a Working Group to combat this problem. Likewise, Curaçao had experienced significant problems dealing with Sargassum and clean-ups. Perhaps there was further opportunity for other uses of the seaweed (e.g. in farming for mulch, fodder etc) - something that this Working Group could explore with further research since the window of use was very limited before the Sargassum started to decompose.

383. The delegate of France thanked the delegates of Grenada and Curaçao and admitted that this was a significant problem. There were two (2) things to consider 1) France would definitely be a member of the Working Group but would only take the initial lead as there was no capacity beyond this - thereafter would ask the SPAW-RAC to spearhead with the addition of other interested Parties; and 2) willing to review the work being undertaken by the Japanese with the aid of known stakeholders currently working with them.
384. The delegate of the DR acknowledged that this was a very relevant subject for the Caribbean including the DR - especially in the area of Punta Cana where tourism was impacted. The document prepared by the Secretariat though not in-depth, did provide sufficient information to give an idea of where things were at, the scope of the problem and how to address this. The problem of beach erosion as a result of Sargassum was also relevant recalling work under the LBS protocol linked to this aspect as well. The method of collection also required attention as this could also have impacts on biodiversity. Supported the interest and work of France including the reminder for cohesion so that efforts were duplicated. As per the various mechanisms for exchange of information outlined in the white paper (page 6), it was important to take these into account in addressing the issue.
385. The delegate of Colombia thanked France for the recommendation and expressed interest in being a part of the Working Group. Colombia indicated that it had participated in the online survey and did not see this reflected in the presentation – this information will therefore be submitted once more following the Meeting to be integrated into the regional report.
386. The delegate of Belize welcomed the idea of the Working Group and in participating - especially as it related to good practices. Agreed that the issue of erosion and the machines used to clear Sargassum could impact the beach and there was also the need to explore agriculture and various options for reuse.
387. Ms. Bustamante expressed mixed notions concerning the proposed Working Group. Suggested to include stakeholders on the ground (e.g. involved in the tourism industry) and not only scientists as there was certainly no lack of data. There were examples of success stories in other countries such as in Mexico where though not perfect, were making a difference and generating income.
388. ***The Chairperson requested that the Meeting approve creation of the Sargassum Working Group – no objections, approved.***
389. Ms. Shakira Bo of CaribWEN was invited to make a presentation on efforts to tackle the trade of species in the Caribbean (see document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/ INF.11).
390. She thanked the Secretariat for the opportunity to present and recalled the side event cohosted with the Animal Welfare Institute. The presentation outlined that illegal trafficking in wildlife was recognized as a global threat to many protected plant and animal species affecting all countries and regions (recognized under the UN SDGs targets 14.4, and 15.7/15.c). The UN General Assembly also adopted resolution 69/314 (*Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife*) in July 2015. UN Environment offices in HQ Nairobi worked closely with governments, law enforcement agencies, biodiversity experts and judiciaries to support the design, implementation and enforcement of laws and regulations that contribute to improved governance of natural resources. This was also linked to the obligations of member states under the Protocol.
391. A recent study by UN Environment ([*The State of Knowledge of Crimes that have Serious Impacts on the Environment*](#)), listed the five (5) most prevalent environmental crimes - 1) wildlife; 2) illegal fishing; 3) pollution; 4) mining and; 5) timber trade. Wildlife crime was particularly persistent in Africa, Asia and Latin America, where all kinds of species were affected (mammals, birdlife, reptiles and amphibians, insects, and plants). A 2013 report by the PEW Charitable Trust indicated that illegal fishing occurred worldwide within both exclusive economic zones of countries and in international waters.
392. The Caribbean was under constant threat from organized wildlife criminals as both terrestrial and marine species in the region were harvested, hunted and trafficked (including turtles/other reptiles, Queen conch, sharks, birds, and forest products). Globally, shares of total seizures from Latin America (2005-2014) represented about 15% of all trade. The top five (5) countries for export of wildlife products (through US ports

- of entry) included Mexico, Haiti, Peru, El Salvador, and The Bahamas with the US generally considered as one of the largest consumers of illegal wildlife/products.
393. According to IUCN and CITES, the top five (5) seized species from the region included conch, sea turtles, caimans, crocodiles, and iguanas. The DR was the most common exporting country for endangered hawksbill sea turtle items, and over half of the shipments of the common iguana were exported from Mexico. A number of iguana species were hunted for food or the high-end black-market pet trade, and within the insular Caribbean they were among the most endangered group of lizards in the world. Marine species were also targeted for the illegal wildlife trade particularly in Latin America (e.g. sharks, sea cucumbers and totoaba). Therefore, the hope via this Meeting was to develop a strong focal point base with Member States to help combat illegal trade.
394. The Chairperson thanked Ms. Bo for the presentation and remarked that there were many areas for collaboration that could be explored - invited Parties to comment further.
395. The Secretariat thanked CaribWEN for the insightful presentation along with organization of the side-event and looked forward to mutual collaboration with the consent of Parties.
396. The delegate of Aruba supported the initiative and the creation of a stronger network/ law enforcement to combat illegal trade.
397. The delegate of the US (MS. Nunez) reiterated thanks to the Secretariat and [UNODC](#) for their efforts. The US had a sustained interest in this area and had been active since the network's inception Parties were encouraged to impart the need for this network and its development to their decision-makers considering limited resources. The US would continue to support this initiative.
398. The delegate of the Netherlands also voiced support and added that coast guards from the territory might be interested in the initiative and welcomed the opportunity to cooperate region wide.
399. The delegate of France endorsed the initiative in alignment with support from previous colleagues - in principle significant personnel and funds were currently dedicated to this by the French Government. Suggested further dialogue with colleagues dealing with this area before formal approval
400. The Chairperson thanked the Meeting and requested endorsement. The Ocean Foundation was then invited to present on its *International Ocean Acidification Initiative* (see document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/ INF.12).
401. On behalf of the foundation, Ms. Alejandra Navarrete and Ms. Alexandra Puritz provided a summary on ocean acidification (OA) and the current negative impacts on marine species (e.g. molluscs, fish biology, coral reefs, and seagrass). It was estimated that more than a third of the world's population would be strongly impacted with the Caribbean region highlighted as one of the areas that was highly sensitive to the effects of acidification. Ocean acidification threatened the well-being of all nations relying on coral reefs for tourism or storm protection, and put at risk many activities linked to ecosystem integrity, fisheries, food security, trade/ commerce, and infrastructure.
402. Collaboration to address ocean acidification involved steps to monitor, analyse data, engage stakeholders and enact legislation to mitigate impacts. The goals of the initiative focused on building capacity, delivery of equipment, and facilitation of networking with linkages to SDG 14 (life below water) with partners such as the [Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network \(GOA-ON\)](#), and [Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO \(IOC-UNESCO\)](#), directly supporting the ability of countries to meet this commitment. The foundation stood ready to support the integration of ocean acidification monitoring and mitigation within the Protocol to enhance its mission and mandate.
403. Proposals for consideration by the Secretariat and Contracting Parties included recognition of OA as a regional matter of common concern and joint collaboration to expand funding opportunities. The Meeting was invited to a symposium at The Marine and Coastal Research Institute (INVEMAR) in January 2019 on the implications of ocean acidification; tools available to integrate monitoring, mitigation and resilience; and opportunities and avenues for interdisciplinary regional collaboration.

404. The delegate of France thanked the foundation for the presentation noting the ocean's importance and the dramatic situation currently being faced - especially the impacts on juvenile fish species and crustacean shells. The ocean also played a significant role in generating global oxygen and many Caribbean countries relied on it for livelihood. The deterioration of many flagship species was occurring right in front of us and as such the future of humanity was at stake. It was stressed that steps should be taken for immediate action with no delay - the level of representation at the Meeting provided the opportunity to make a difference
405. The delegate of Grenada expressed thanks for the excellent presentation which confirmed the facts according to what was already suspected and strengthened the reality of ocean acidification. In the case of Grenada, this impacted not only corals but also turtles and the seagrass which they ate - this had deteriorated and was now replaced by seaweed which the turtles did not eat. The influx of Sargassum had also become an issue which was most likely nature's way of rectifying this imbalance. This should be taken into account and likewise compelled the Meeting to take immediate action.
406. The Chairperson invited Mr. John Knowles of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to present on progress *Towards an enhanced Regional Governance Framework within the CLME+/Cartagena Convention region*.
407. Mr. Knowles provided an overview of the CLME+ region, corresponding governance, and the three (3) major transboundary issues within the region (habitat degradation, marine pollution and unsustainable fishing) whose effects were being exacerbated by climate change. By strengthening ocean governance, the region could effectively address these issues at the large marine ecosystem scale - the roadmap, along with a list of jointly agreed upon priority actions to strengthen ocean governance, were outlined under the [Strategic Action Programme or SAP](#).
408. As with any well-intended and robust decision making/management process, it was crucial to measure progress and results which were usually carried out through monitoring and evaluation. This was especially important in the face of uncertainty in very complex systems such as the CLME+ Region. To determine the progress for each SAP Action would require determining each action's key results, establishing clear objectives and identification of indicators. There was overlap between evaluation and monitoring of the SAP, and the indicators used in the *State of the Marine Ecosystems and Associated Economies (SOMEE)* /other goals and targets across the Caribbean. A variety of recommendations for consideration by the Protocol were outlined.

AGENDA ITEM 10: OTHER BUSINESS

409. Participants were invited to raise any other issues not covered by the preceding agenda items, but which were pertinent relevant to the scope of the Meeting.
410. The delegate of France recalled the proposal by the Secretariat to have the three (3) COPs jointly. Clarification was requested on this proposed re-organization as it was an interesting approach from the standpoint of financial resources.
411. The Secretariat (Ms. Inness) explained that this issue had been raised with the Bureau/its President (France) and the aim was for the [Convention to harmonise all COPs into a single meeting similar to other conventions. Therefore, instead of having separate COPs for the SPAW and LBS Protocols, there would be one meeting with separate sections to deal with issues specific to each. Only Contracting Parties would be asked to approve the recommendations coming out of the respective STACs while Non-Contracting Parties would abstain. It was clarified that this would not apply for the upcoming COP as it would need to be approved by the Parties. The Secretariat would simply be presenting a paper for consideration and the upcoming meetings would be held as customary.](#)

AGENDA ITEM 11: ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING

412. The Rapporteur of the Meeting presented the draft recommendations of the Meeting (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/7). The Meeting was invited to approve the recommendations, with amendments and corrections introduced as appropriate. After considerable discussion relating particularly to Recommendations I and III, the recommendations were approved as contained in Annex III and would be forwarded for approval by the SPAW COP10 in 2019 for adoption.
413. The Rapporteur reminded delegates that the recommendations would be circulated for further review and comment after the STAC.

AGENDA ITEM 12: CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

414. The Chairperson thanked the Meeting, interpreters and Observers who participated and expressed appreciation for the work accomplished. He thanked the Secretariat for choosing Panama as host and Chair of the Meeting given the country's interest in preserving biodiversity.
415. The delegate of the US (Ms. Nunez) thanked all delegations in particular France, for the active dialogue which demonstrated mutual passion, and thanked the Chair, Secretariat and the RAC for facilitating this.
416. The delegate of France shared the sentiment and thanked the delegates and Secretariat despite France not achieving as much as was anticipated.
417. The Coordinator (Ms. Inniss) noted that the Secretariat had been trying over the past two (2) years to maintain relevance to the Contracting Parties. The passion expressed was equally reflected by the staff who were to be commended for their dedication and work behind the scenes organizing the Meeting months in advance. It was important to maintain networking and as indicated at the start, efforts would be made to meet delegates personally. Parties were urged to respond to requests by the Secretariat for updated information to ensure accuracy which would facilitate information sharing. Negotiations were underway for the upcoming IGM/COP with a possible host country identified - it was hoped that this would be concluded by the end of December.
418. On behalf of the Secretariat and UN Environment, Ms. Inniss thanked the Chair and Rapporteur for their dedication and efforts during the Meeting. Special thanks were expressed to interpreters, various support staff, the Member States, Observers and partners while acknowledging their valuable contribution – particularly Observers who were a very important part of the process.
419. The Meeting was closed on Friday 7 December 2018 at 5:08p.m. by the Chair of the Meeting and the Secretariat.

ANNEX I - PROVISIONAL AGENDA

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Organisation of the Meeting
 - 2.1. Rules of Procedure
 - 2.2. Election of Officers
 - 2.3. Organisation of Work
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Status of Activities of the SPAW Subprogramme for 2017-2018, including activities of the Regional Activity Centre for SPAW (SPAW-RAC) in Guadeloupe
5. Protected Areas proposed by Parties for listing under the SPAW Protocol
6. Species proposed by Contracting Parties for listing under the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol
7. Reporting Format for Exemptions under Article 11(2) of the SPAW Protocol proposed by the Ad Hoc Working Group
8. Workplan and Budget of the SPAW Subprogramme for the 2019-2020 Biennium
9. Emerging Issues (Sargassum)
10. Other Business
11. Adoption of the Recommendations of the Meeting
12. Closure of the Meeting

ANNEX II - LIST OF DOCUMENTS

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Symbol	Title
<u>Working Documents</u>	
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/1	Provisional Agenda
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/2	Provisional Annotated Agenda
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/3	Report of the Working Group on the Listing of Species under the Annexes to the SPAW Protocol
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/4	Proposals for Protected Areas to be listed under the SPAW Protocol
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/5	Draft Workplan and Budget of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Sub-programme for the 2019 - 2020 Biennium
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/6	Recommendations of the Eighth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean region (<i>to be prepared during the meeting</i>)
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/7	Report of Eighth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region (<i>to be prepared after the meeting</i>)
<u>Information Documents</u>	
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.1	Provisional List of Documents
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.2	Provisional List of Participants (<i>to be finalised during the meeting</i>)
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.3	Status of Activities of the SPAW Subprogramme for 2017 - 2018 (<i>includes status of STAC7 Recommendations and COP9 Decisions</i>)
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.4	Report of the SPAW Regional Activity Centre (SPAW-RAC) in Guadeloupe: operations and budget for the period 2017 - 2018
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.5	Update on the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM) and its major activities (2018)
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.6	Report on the “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean through Ecosystem Based Management” Project (2018)
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.6 Addendum 1	Summary of Project accomplishments: January to December 2017
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.7	Proposals Submitted by Parties of Species for listing under the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.8	Sargassum White Paper - Sargassum Outbreak in the Caribbean: Challenges, Opportunities and Regional Situation
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.8 Addendum 1	Establishment of a Working Group on the Sargassum influx proposal - Government of France

Information Documents

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40 /INF.9	United States Exemptions Report to the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol of the Cartagena Convention for 2017
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.10	Updating CaMPAM MPA Database - <i>Product of a consultant agreement with GCFI</i>
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.11	Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network (CaribWEN) Briefing
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.12	The Ocean Foundation - Overview
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.13	State of Marine Ecosystems and shared Living Marine Resource in the Wider Caribbean (Gulf of Mexico and CLME+ Region) - Discussion Draft for Stakeholder Review and Input
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.14	The GEF Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+) Project – Information paper and Recommendations
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/3 Rev.1	Draft Reporting Format for Exemptions under Article 11(2) of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol (SPAW) - Annex (<i>includes case study from the Government of Curaçao</i>)
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/4	Report of the Working Group on the Listing of Species under the Annexes to the SPAW Protocol
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/5 Addendum 1 Rev.1	Map of SPAW Protected Areas already Listed In 2012 and 2014, and Protected Areas to be Listed
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/INF.6	Evaluation of CaMPAM Activities and Recommendations for Improvement - <i>An analysis of the last 15 years</i>
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/INF.8 Rev.1	Factsheet on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean through Ecosystem Based Management”
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/ INF.10	Agoa Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network (CARI’MAM) White Paper: <i>Strengthen Regional Cooperation for The Conservation of Marine Mammals within the Caribbean Region and Beyond</i>
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/ INF.13	Overarching Principles and Best Practice Guidelines for Marine Mammal Watching in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR)
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/ INF.16	The Sister Sanctuaries Program for Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean – A US/NOAA, Dominican Republic, France and the Netherlands Initiative
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/ INF.17	GCRMN-Caribbean Guidelines for Coral Reef Biophysical Monitoring
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.37/INF.7 Rev.2	The GEF Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+) Project and its joint implementation through the AMEP and SPAW Subprogrammes
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.37/INF.10	Annex A and C (Agreement) – CLME+: Catalysing Implementation of Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.36/INF.7	Report on the Ratification of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and its Protocols (Cartagena Convention)

Information Documents

- UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.37/3 Guidance document - Criteria and process to assess exemptions under Article 11(2) of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol (SPAW) (*includes draft format for reporting exemptions*)
- UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.37/5 Decisions of the Ninth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region, Cayenne, French Guiana, 13 March 2017.
- UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/ 8 Report of the Seventh Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region, 31 October- 4 November 2016 Miami, Florida.
- UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.39/INF.11 OSPAR and Caribbean Environment Programme Cooperation Project Document

Reference Documents

- SOMEE: Booklet An Information Booklet - State of the Marine Environment and associated Economies CLME+ SOMEE in the Wider Caribbean (a collaborative, integrated long-term reporting mechanism)
- CLME+ SAP v1.6.1 CLME+ Strategic Action Programme (SAP) Information Booklet (v1.6.1), 2017
- MTS 2018-2021 UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021
- UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/6 Rev.1 Workplan and Budget for the SPAW Regional Programme for the 2017 - 2018 Biennium
- UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.39/6 Report of the Seventeenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Fourteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Cayenne, French Guiana, 15-17 March 2017
- UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.37/6 Report of the Ninth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region, Cayenne, French Guiana, 13 March 2017
- UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.39/3 Work plan and Budget for the Caribbean Environment Programme for the biennium 2017-2018
- UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.34/3 Decisions of the Eighth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region, Cartagena, Colombia, 9 December 2014
- UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.36/INF.10 Report on the Workshop of Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) for the Wider Caribbean: Review, improve and revitalize the network and the nodes for more effective coral reef monitoring and data management, Curaçao, 6 - 8 August 2014

Reference Documents

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.36/INF.9	Report of the First Meeting of Managers of the Protected Areas Listed under the SPAW Protocol of the Cartagena Convention at the 66 th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) Conference, Corpus Christi, Texas, USA, November 5, 2013
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.36/INF.8	Report on the LifeWeb-Spain UNEP-CEP Meeting on Scenarios for Transboundary Marine Mammal Management in the Wider Caribbean, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 23 - 24 April 2014
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.36/INF.6	Update on the Implementation of Activities in Support of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (MMAP), including the Government of Spain-UNEP Lifeweb project “ <i>Protecting Habitats and Migration Corridors for Marine Mammals in the South and Northeast Pacific and the Wider Caribbean through Marine Protected Area Networks</i> ”
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.31/INF.6	IUCN Caribbean Red List of Threatened Species – A Proposal
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.29/INF.5	Exemptions to the SPAW Protocol Under Article 11(2): A Legal Review
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.32 INF.9 Rev.3	Template FOR National Reporting on the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols
UNEP(DEC)/CAR WG.26/4	Draft Grid for the Objective Evaluation of Proposals for Inclusion in the SPAW Protected Areas List
UNEP(DEC)/CAR IG.20/4	Structure and Scope of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) of the SPAW Protocol
UNEP(OCA)/CAR IG.11/7	Proposed Legal Framework for the Administrative Technical and Financial Operations of RACs and RANs
UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.36 CRP.1	Amendment to the Financial Rules for the Cartagena Convention
UNEP, 2010	Rules of Procedure for the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)
UNEP, 2008	Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (MMAP) in the Wider Caribbean Region. United Nations Environment Programme – Caribbean Environment Programme, Kingston, Jamaica. 2008. (English and Spanish)
UNEP, 1991	Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries for the Adoption of the Annexes to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region
UNEP, 1990	Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Caribbean Region
UNEP, 2012	Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills, Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife and the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities

ANNEX III – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING

Having convened the Eighth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) in the Wider Caribbean Region;

The Meeting recommends,

RECOMMENDATION I

Having reviewed the “Status of Activities of the SPA Subprogramme for 2017-2018 (including status of STAC7 Recommendations and COP9 Decisions)” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.3) and commending the work undertaken by the Secretariat and the SPA-RAC;

Having reviewed the “Report of the SPA Regional Activity Centre (SPA-RAC) in Guadeloupe: RAC Operations and Budget for the period 2017-2018” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.4) and **gratefully acknowledging** the generous contribution of the Government of France;

Taking note and welcoming the “Update on the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM) and its major activities” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.5);

Recognizing the work and accomplishments of the CaMPAM network for over 20 years;

Having reviewed the Report on the “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean through Ecosystem-based management” Regional Workshop (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.6 and UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG 38/INF.8 Rev.1), **taking note** of the outcomes of the Special Session on the Project “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean through Ecosystem-based management” convened on 5 December 2018, Panama, and **gratefully acknowledging** the generous support of the Government of Italy towards commitments of Member States in their implementation of SDG 14 through ecosystem-based and holistic Marine Protected Area management;

Having reviewed the “Draft Workplan and Budget of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Subprogramme for the 2019-2020 Biennium” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/5) and noting its linkages and contributions to the SDGs, the SAMOA Pathway and Aichi Targets;

Acknowledging the comprehensive Workplan presented for the biennium 2019-2020 and the limited budget available thus far; **and**

Further recognizing that such a broad-scope work programme, demands the setting of priorities and increased capacities of the Secretariat and the SPA-RAC;

Recommends that:

1. Governments of the region join the SPA Protocol as Contracting Parties and **further recommends** that the Secretariat continue efforts to secure ratification with Governments which have initiated actions to join or are in the process of joining the Protocol.
2. The COP10 provides further guidance to the Secretariat regarding the priority actions for the SPA work programme, as well as assistance for securing increased resources both for activities and Programme management by the Secretariat.
3. The Workplan and Budget be presented to COP10 for approval.

4. The Secretariat and Parties emphasize within the proposed Workplan:
 - (i) the need to secure financial support to the continuation of activities under the CaMPAM network and forum, particularly focusing on the role of MPAs as a vehicle for the application of EBM, DSS and MSP, especially in light of the Project “Effective MPA Development and Implementation for Achievement of SDG 14.5” to be implemented in the Caribbean with the support of the UN Environment (Ecosystem Division).
 - (ii) the further development of the on-going cooperation between CEP and the OSPAR Commission under the Voluntary Commitment focusing on MPA enhancement of management capacities.
 - (iii) the development of a second phase of the project “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean through Ecosystem-based management” project.
 - (iv) the networking of Marine Mammal Protected Areas in line with the MMAP through the implementation of the CARI’MAM Project.
 - (v) the opportunities presented through the implementation of the CARIB-Coast Project in support of the conservation and management of mangroves and coral reefs to address coastal resilience.

RECOMMENDATION II

Having reviewed the “Proposals for Protected Areas to be listed under the SPAW Protocol” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/4);

Taking note of the renewed commitment for the development of the cooperation programme for protected areas listed under the Protocol as per Article 7 (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.36/INF.9); **and**

Recognizing the contribution from the SPAW-RAC and the experts participating in the Ad hoc working group;

Taking note of the review by the Protected Areas Working Group and the report under the coordination of SPAW-RAC;

Recommends that:

1. The SPAW-RAC continues to maintain, improve and update the dedicated database to house the national reports on the protected areas listed as well as those recommended by STAC to be listed including the web-based tool for Parties to prepare and submit the protected areas reports on-line.
2. The COP10 approves the following Protected Areas proposed by the Government of France the National Natural Reserve of Kaw-Roura and the National Natural Reserve of Amana in French Guiana; and the Mount Scenery National Park of Saba Island by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
3. Parties which have not done so consider submitting protected areas to be listed under the Protocol in the upcoming biennium for future listing.
4. The Secretariat through SPAW-RAC with the participation of the Governments of Colombia, France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United States of America, develops Terms of Reference for the Ad hoc Protected Areas Working Group for consideration by the COP10 taking into account the suggestions made during the meeting.
5. In keeping with Article 19 and para. 25 of the approved Guidelines and Criteria for listing protected areas, the Secretariat sends a reporting format on the status of the listed sites to Contracting Parties.

RECOMMENDATION III

Having reviewed the “Report of the Working Group on the Evaluation of Species for listing under the Annexes to the SPAW Protocol”, (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/3); and the proposals for listing and supporting documents on status of species of sharks and rays (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40/INF.7);

Recognizing the contribution from the SPAW-RAC and the experts participating in the Ad hoc working group;

Recommends that:

1. The following proposed species be added to the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol:

Annex II

Pristis pristis, Largetooth sawfish

Annex III

Carcharhinus falciformis, Silky shark

2. The SPAW RAC identify all species listed as entire groups under the Protocol and includes the species individually in the list, such as the species included under the group of corals and marine mammals.
3. The Secretariat through SPAW-RAC with the participation of the Governments of Colombia, France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United States of America, develops Terms of Reference for the Ad hoc Species Working Group for consideration by the COP10 taking into account the suggestions made during the meeting:
 - Addressing as priority the following species: the parrotfish and other herbivores associated with coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangroves with due consideration to socio-cultural-economic dimensions; the whale shark *Rhincodon typus*; the manta ray *Manta birostris*, as well as other species proposed by Contracting Parties. In this context, enhanced collaboration for regional management strategies should also be considered for listed species under the Annexes of the Protocol.
4. Parties are invited to identify and propose new species for listing to be assessed by the Working Group and for consideration by STAC9.

RECOMMENDATION IV

Welcoming and noting the United States Exemptions Report (2017) (contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.40 /INF.9);

Welcoming and noting the intervention by the Government of Curaçao updating the STAC about the status of their exemption report submitted at STAC7 as a response to decision 7 (iii) of COP9;

Taking note of recent reports on the taking of hundreds of marine mammals per year and reports of harvesting of sea turtles still being allowed by some Contracting Parties in direct infraction to the Protocol;

Recommends that:

1. The Secretariat, through SPAW-RAC, develop TORs for the Ad Hoc Working Group on exemptions for consideration by COP10 taking into accounts the suggestions made during the meeting.
2. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Exemptions review the United States Exemptions Report (2017) and report on their findings, as well as the Curaçao Exemptions Report (2016) and any additional information that may be provided by the Government of Curaçao since the submission of the original exemption report (as reported to STAC7) and report to the STAC9 for assessment.

3. The COP10 of the SPAW Protocol call on Contracting Parties to comply with the provisions of the Protocol and in the event that taking of any species listed under Annex II of the Protocol occurs that an exemption report be submitted to the STAC in order to demonstrate the pertinence of such take.

RECOMMENDATION V

Taking note of the Report of the Secretariat “Sargassum White Paper - Sargassum outbreak in the Caribbean: Challenges, opportunities and regional situation” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG 40/INF.8) as well as the existence of an on-line platform for discussion on Sargassum coordinated by the SPAW-RAC;

Welcoming the proposal by the Government of France to establish an Ad Hoc Working Group on Sargassum under the Coordination of the SPAW-RAC;

Recommends that:

1. An Ad Hoc Working Group on Sargassum be established, including Belize, Colombia, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, France and Grenada, with consideration of its composition regarding (among others), number of members from each Contracting Party, limited to two members per Party: to be nominated by each national Focal Point, as well as a number of seats to be allocated for representation by civil society organizations and independent experts.
2. The Working Group develop clear objectives and responsibilities for its work.
3. Establish coordination and collaboration with relevant regional and global initiatives in order to promote maximum impact of synergies and solutions to the Sargassum outbreaks.

RECOMMENDATION VI

Welcoming the convening of the Special Session on the Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network - CARIBWen (6 December 2018, Panama City, Panama) organized by the UNODC and CEP with the support of the Animal Welfare Institute;

Recommends that:

The Secretariat continue its collaboration with UNODC and interested partners to further develop and strengthen operational, prosecutorial and judicial capacities in the fight against wildlife crime in the Caribbean.

RECOMMENDATION VII

Taking note and welcoming the Regional Workshop on the Development of the Report of the: “State of the marine ecosystem and shared marine living resources” and Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the valuation, Protection and /or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the CLME+ convened jointly by the Secretariat and the CLME+ Project (GEF UNDP Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+)) (3 - 4 December 2018, Panama City, Panama);

Acknowledging the need to enhance coordination among regional and subregional organisations with a mandate for management of the marine environment and living marine resources;

Recommends that:

1. The Secretariat continues progress towards completing the draft State of Habitat and Regional Strategy and Action Plan under the CLME+ for consideration at COP10 and further relevant action, taking into account the comments and inputs received by Parties and partners during the deliberations at the above Regional Workshop and other consultations as appropriate.
2. The Secretariat continue to contribute to the process supported by the CLME+ Project to identify a Permanent Policy Coordination Mechanism (PPCM) and a Sustainable Financing Plan (SFP) for consolidation of an integrated ocean governance framework in the WCR; including placing the topic on the agenda of COP10 in 2019.

RECOMMENDATION VIII

Taking note and welcoming the Ocean Foundation's international ocean acidification initiative to address ocean acidification as a regional topic of common concern to be acknowledged by the SPAW Protocol;

Recommends that:

1. The Secretariat partner with the Ocean Foundation to implement ocean acidification monitoring and mitigation projects in key marine ecosystems in SPAW member countries, and to seek joint collaboration for proposals to expand funding opportunities.

ANNEX IV - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

List of Participants

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