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SUMMARY OF NATIONAL REPORTS

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.49/CRP.2

Agenda Item 6.8: Reporting by Contracting Parties on the Cartagena Convention (2023–2025 Biennium)

Submitted by: The Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention

Executive Summary

This Conference Room Paper presents a qualitative assessment of seven Contracting Parties — Colombia, France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Grenada, Guyana, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras — who reported on the status of implementation of the Cartagena Convention during the 2023–2025 biennium. The analysis highlights strong national legal frameworks, growing integration of coastal and marine governance into national policy agendas, and progress in monitoring and contingency planning. However, all Parties identify common challenges in financing, enforcement, inter-institutional coordination, and technical capacity for pollution monitoring and data management. The Secretariat concludes that tailored, country-specific support combined with regional co-operation on monitoring, compliance, and resource mobilization will be essential to accelerate implementation and achieve measurable results by Contracting Parties under the Cartagena Convention.

1. Introduction / Introducción / Introduction

1.1 The 2023–2025 biennium marked continued progress by Contracting Parties in advancing the objectives of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols on Oil Spills, Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW), and Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS). National reports submitted by seven countries provide valuable insight into the evolving capacity and institutional readiness of the region to meet their Convention obligations.

1.2 This paper summarizes national findings, identifies areas of strength and constraint, and presents the Secretariat's observations on the support required to enhance more effective implementation of national obligations.

2. Methodology and Scope / Metodología y alcance / Méthodologie et champ d'application

2.1 The assessment draws upon national reports officially submitted to the Secretariat by the Governments of Colombia, France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Grenada, Guyana, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras for the 2023–2025 biennium.

2.2 Each report was reviewed for information on governance structures, legal and policy frameworks, monitoring and reporting systems, implementation of the SPAW, LBS, and Oil Spills Protocols, as appropriate, and national capacity-building needs.

2.3 The analysis emphasizes qualitative and strategic aspects — focusing on readiness, institutional coordination, and the extent to which current capacities allow Parties to meet their Convention commitments.

3. Summary of National Findings / Resumen de los resultados nacionales / Résumé des constats nationaux

3.1 Colombia

3.1.1 Colombia maintains one of the most comprehensive policy frameworks in the region for ocean and coastal governance. The National Policy for the Ocean and Coastal Spaces (PNAOCI) and multiple CONPES instruments link marine protection with national development, biodiversity, and climate policy.

3.1.2 The national monitoring network (REDCAM), coordinated by INVEMAR, supports regular assessment of water quality, microplastics, hydrocarbons, and nutrients.

3.1.3 The country's main challenges lie in sustaining cross-ministerial coordination, ensuring long-term financing for wastewater infrastructure, and advancing ratification of the LBS Protocol.

3.1.4 Overall, Colombia demonstrates strong strategic direction and technical foundations but requires strengthened financing and delivery capacity for implementation at scale.

3.2 France

3.2.1 France applies an advanced regulatory regime across its Caribbean territories through the *Plan Eau DOM* and the Basin Water Management Plans (SDAGE 2028–2033).

3.2.2 National measures include bans on open-loop scrubber discharges, restrictions on the immersion of polluted dredge materials, and explicit seabed protection targets under the National Biodiversity Strategy.

3.2.3 Institutional coordination between national and local agencies is well established, providing an effective model for integrated water and pollution management.

3.2.4 France's capacity is fully adequate for its obligations; its experience offers valuable best practices for other Parties on enforcement, compliance monitoring, and integrated coastal management.

3.3 Kingdom of the Netherlands

3.3.1 The Netherlands demonstrates a robust multi-level governance model encompassing the European Netherlands and its Caribbean territories (Aruba, Curaçao, St. Maarten, Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius).

3.3.2 The Caribbean Netherlands operate under the Nature and Environment Policy Plan 2020–2030 and the EEZ Management and Maritime Emergency Response Plans, which set clear operational responsibilities and response capabilities.

3.3.3 Regular oil spill response training, established protected areas, and functioning environmental legislation provide high technical readiness.

3.3.4 However, smaller island territories report limited access to international environmental finance and varying enforcement capacity.

3.3.5 Overall, the Netherlands exhibits strong policy maturity but benefits from continued co-operation to harmonize monitoring and access financing for SIDS-scale implementation.

3.4 Grenada

3.4.1 Grenada has advanced its legal and policy framework through the Environmental Management Act (2015), the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Policy, and the creation of the Ministry of the Blue Economy and Marine Affairs.

3.4.2 Implementation of SPAW and LBS obligations is supported by effluent standards, plastic control regulations, and participation in regional initiatives such as ReMLit and Recycle OECS.

3.4.3 Limited laboratory capacity, lack of enforcement personnel, and sustainable financing remain key barriers.

3.4.4 Grenada's progress illustrates institutional innovation but highlights the continued need for regional technical and financial assistance to operationalize its commitments.

3.5 Guyana

3.5.1 The Environmental Protection Agency serves as the focal institution, integrating Cartagena Convention obligations into its environmental authorization system.

3.5.2 Guyana's National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (2020) and new coastal and inland monitoring programmes reflect responsiveness to the expansion of the oil and gas sector.

3.5.3 Constraints include limited laboratory infrastructure, high analytical costs, and the need for technical training in pollution load modelling.

3.5.4 Guyana's capacity is growing rapidly but requires targeted support in monitoring, laboratory accreditation, and marine pollution data management.

3.6 Dominican Republic

3.6.1 The Dominican Republic maintains a comprehensive legal framework (Law 64-00) and a mature National Coastal Water Quality Monitoring Network with approximately 150 stations.

3.6.2 The country has designated five SPAW-protected areas and enforces seasonal bans for key species.

3.6.3 Implementation of the LBS Protocol has been advanced through prior national action plans and ongoing development of marine litter and extended producer responsibility measures.

3.6.4 The principal constraint is intersectoral coordination and consistent policy execution rather than legislative gaps.

3.6.5 The Dominican Republic represents a mature system that could share experience regionally, particularly in monitoring and species management.

3.7 Honduras

3.7.1 Honduras demonstrates renewed commitment through updated national policies and institutional collaboration involving the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (SERNA), the Center for Marine Studies, and the Port Authority.

3.7.2 National efforts emphasize coastal pollution control, mangrove and wetland protection, and development of contingency plans for oil spills and hazardous waste.

3.7.3 Progress toward SPAW implementation is evident through management plans for key coastal areas and partnerships with NGOs for species protection.

3.7.4 Capacity challenges remain in pollution monitoring, wastewater treatment coverage, and enforcement of environmental regulations at the local level.

3.7.5 Honduras shows positive momentum but requires technical assistance in data collection, monitoring, and project preparation for accessing international funding.

4. Comparative and Regional Analysis / Análisis comparativo y regional / Analyse comparative et régionale

4.1 All seven countries have established national environmental frameworks and designated competent authorities responsible for the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

4.2 Common achievements include:

- Integration of marine and coastal management into national development and biodiversity strategies;
- Existence of contingency plans for oil-spill and marine-pollution events;
- Growing attention to marine litter, plastics, and emerging contaminants; and
- Active engagement in regional and international environmental projects.

4.3 Persistent challenges across Parties include:

- Limited laboratory capacity and uneven access to analytical services;
- Weak inter-sectoral coordination, particularly between environment, fisheries, and local government;
- Inadequate and unpredictable financing for implementation; and
- Insufficient technical personnel for data management, compliance, and enforcement.

4.4 The overall regional picture indicates steady institutional progress but varying levels of technical and financial readiness. Larger and higher-capacity Parties (France, the Netherlands, Colombia, Dominican Republic) are able to meet most obligations, while smaller island and developing States (Grenada, Guyana, Honduras) require targeted support and capacity-building.

5. Capacity Assessment and Common Needs / Evaluación de la capacidad y necesidades comunes / Évaluation des capacités et besoins communs

5.1 The analysis identifies three broad tiers of implementation capacity:

- (a) **High institutional maturity:** France and the Netherlands, with advanced legal systems, consistent monitoring, and enforcement mechanisms.
- (b) **Strategic frameworks in place but implementation constraints:** Colombia and the Dominican Republic, requiring enhanced coordination and financial delivery capacity.
- (c) **Emerging systems with strong commitment but limited resources:** Grenada, Guyana, and Honduras, where institutional, technical, and financial constraints limit full compliance.

5.2 Common areas for capacity development include:

- Establishment and networking of accredited laboratories and QA/QC procedures;
- Strengthening inter-ministerial coordination and results-based planning;
- Development of bankable wastewater and solid-waste investment projects;
- Institutionalization of marine-litter and extended-producer-responsibility (EPR) programmes; and
- Training in data management, enforcement, and monitoring techniques.

5.3 Regional cooperation, peer exchange, and joint training initiatives can significantly reduce costs and enhance implementation effectiveness.

6. Secretariat Observations and Recommendations / Observaciones y recomendaciones de la Secretaría / Observations et recommandations du Secrétariat

6.1 The Secretariat notes that progress under the 2023–2025 biennium reflects both national effort and increased regional collaboration through initiatives such as ReMLit, GEF projects, and the Caribbean Node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter.

6.2 The Secretariat encourages Parties to:

- (a) Strengthen inter-agency coordination through national inter-sectoral committees or equivalent mechanisms;
- (b) Prioritize the integration of SPAW, LBS, and Oil Spills commitments into national development plans and budgets;
- (c) Establish partnerships with regional laboratories and research institutions to support data quality and comparability; and
- (d) Mobilize resources through the Caribbean Trust Fund, GEF, and bilateral donors for infrastructure, monitoring, and enforcement.

6.3 Continued reporting and active participation of all Parties are essential for evaluating progress and ensuring alignment with the adopted medium-term Strategies of the Cartagena Convention.

Acknowledgment / Agradecimiento / Remerciements

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