

# UNEP Regional Seas Programme Global and Regional Ocean Policy and Governance

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Cartagena Convention  
20<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties

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By Johan Robinson, UNEP  
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# UNEP mandate: role/mission

- UNEP has been the world's leading environmental advocate for over **50 years**
- Technical expertise in **science, data, knowledge** and **experience**
- Global policy and the global agenda on the environment through **international agreements** and **local policy**
- Solutions delivered by **new thinking** and **science-based policy** and **action**



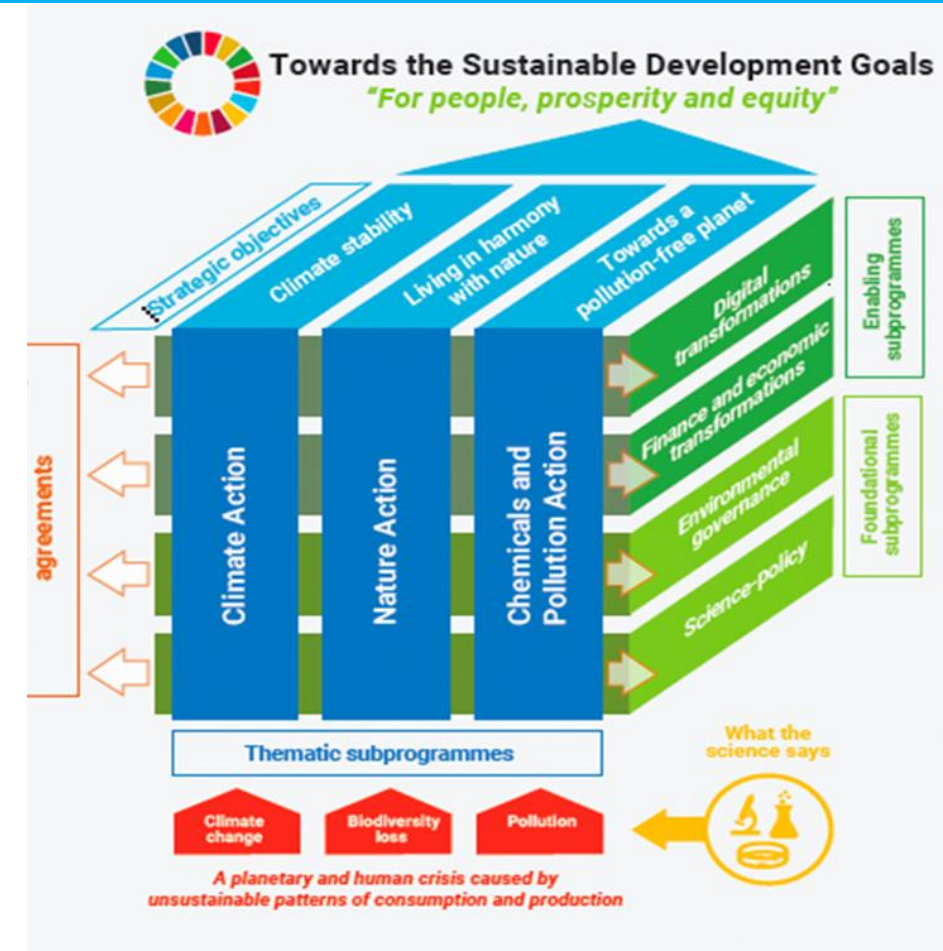
# UNEP' Medium Term Strategy 2022-2025

Goals: Healthy, productive and resilient environment/ocean underpinning well-being of human societies

- Invest in **nature and system transformation**
- To address the **three planetary crisis**, climate change, Biodiversity loss and pollution

## UNEP 's strategies

- **Achieve transformational change** in each of the systems driving environmental degradation
- **Create opportunities** for multiple global environmental and development benefits,
- **Leveraging** MEAs, Global Commitments and Sustainable Development Goals to raise ambition
- **Integrated approaches** across sectors and jurisdictions, policies and programmes
- **Institutional coherence** in delivering durable, long-term global environmental outcomes.



# Global Ocean Governance & Resolutions Directing UN Agencies to support Member States implementation

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- UNCLOS – Part XII and Article 197
- SDG 14 - Life below water
- UN General Assembly resolutions:
  - BBNJ Agreement adopted under UNCLOS on June 19, 2023
  - UNGA Resolution 76/212 on Integrated Coastal Zone Mngt
  - UNGA Resolution 77/248 on Oceans and Law of the Seas
  - UNGA Resolution 69/15 on SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action [SAMOA] Pathway
- UNEA resolutions
  - Plastics and micro plastics
  - Pollution, land-based sources and activities, nutrients, wastewater
  - Nature based solutions
  - Mangroves, coral reefs, peatlands
- Regional Seas Conventions & Action Plans



# UNEP Regional Seas Programme

- UNEP was established in 1972 and soon after, the Regional Seas Programme was launched in 1974
- The Regional Seas Programme now covers 18 regions globally, with over 146 participating countries.
- The 14 were established by or under the auspices of UNEP: Black Sea, Wider Caribbean, East Asian Seas, Eastern Africa, South Asian Seas, Caspian Sea, ROPME Sea Area; Mediterranean, North-East Pacific, North-West Pacific, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, South-East Pacific, Pacific and Western Africa.
- 4 are independent partner programmes forming part of the UNEP global regional seas programme: Arctic region, Antarctic region, Baltic Sea, and North-East Atlantic region.



# Regional Seas cooperation in ocean governance

- The Regional Seas Programme provides a platform for countries sharing a common sea/ocean to **cooperate in an integrated manner**
- The programme is **an important mechanism** for the implementation of the global Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)
- **UNEP assists and guides coordination and facilitation** of the development of the different instruments under the programme, in collaboration with other international and regional bodies
- UNEP's **funding, intellectual, political, facilitative leadership and convening power** was instrumental in the negotiation and development of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs)
- In some regions, the States/Parties took over the operation of the RSCAPs, while the operations of some other RSCAPs are still managed by UNEP





# UNEP Regional Seas Programme Strategic Directions



- UNEP Regional Seas Programme Strategic Directions 2022-2025 aims to mainstream **conservation, monitoring, and combating the triple planetary crises** to achieve long-term health of the ocean
- Three strategic goals
  1. Secure diverse, resilient, and productive marine and coastal ecosystems
  2. Support assessment, information and knowledge management at all levels to strengthen science-policy dialogue
  3. Increase reach and mainstreaming of the Regional Seas Programme

# Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Adopted in December 2022

The framework has four goals and 23 action-oriented global targets crafted to be applicable to all biomes ex. Target 1 – 4

## Key Considerations

- Harmonized national monitoring, reporting and data collection
- Mechanism for regular exchange and mapping
- Elaborating and translating into regional specificities and supporting revision of strategic documents
- Supporting ratification and accession of existing biodiversity instruments





# Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

- Upscaling of successful pilots
- Identifying and making available pool of experts to support capacity building
- Technical guidance for headline indicators
- Identifying issues and priorities
- Reviewing dependencies and impact on ecosystems
- Reviewing existing policies and management frameworks
- Reviewing governance and management
- Stakeholder engagement activities
- Developing tools and guidelines for implementation

UNEP Regional Seas Programme is developing a strategy for Implementation in the regional seas



# United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

## Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)



Legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

Adopted in June 2023

70+ nations have signed the historic treaty

### Key Principles

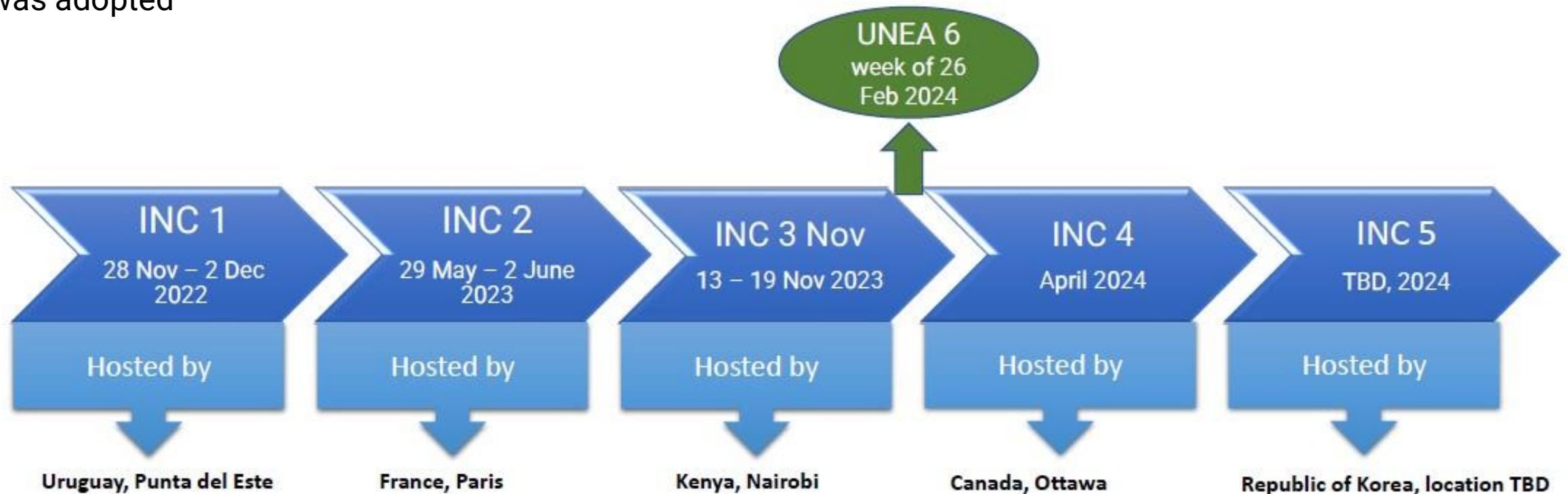
- Conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ
- Marine genetic resources, including fair and equitable sharing of benefits
- Measures such as area-based management tools (AMBTs)
- Environmental impact assessments
- Capacity –building and the transfer of marine technology



# Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee

To develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

UNEA 5.2 resolution 5/14 titled “End plastic pollution: Towards an internationally legally binding instrument” was adopted



# Sustainable Blue Economy

## UNEP Regional Seas Programme Strategic Guide



### Strategic Guide on Blue Economy for the Regional Seas Programme

- Launch in early 2024
- Steppingstone for Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans
- Goal is to achieve coherence by all Conventions and Action Plans while equipping basic elements to adapt going forward
- A tool for implementing and demonstrating **sustainable ocean-based economy, integrated coastal zone management, and marine spatial planning**



# Opportunities for SIDS in ocean governance



- 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Small Island Developing States 27 – 30 May 2024 in Antigua and Barbuda
  - Assess the progress, gaps, and challenges in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and the SAMOA Pathway, and the SIDS Partnership Framework
  - Renewed political commitment to address the gaps and the vulnerability of SIDS
  - Focus on practical and pragmatic actions for implementation

# Opportunities for SIDS in ocean governance



- Leverage existing mechanisms for **coordinated action and support** in alignment with regional frameworks and national priorities
- Regional seas conventions and action plans provide a platform for **dialogue and information exchange** between countries, scientific communities, and civil societies to promote **knowledge-sharing and cooperation**, including through regional preparatory meetings, Intergovernmental Meetings, working groups on marine litter, etc.



# Upcoming important events

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-3)**
  - 13 – 19 November 2023, Nairobi, Kenya
- **23<sup>rd</sup> Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Programme**
  - 20 – 23 November 2023, Bridgetown, Barbados
- **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme**
  - 1 January 2024
- **6<sup>th</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)**
  - 26 February – 1 March 2024, Nairobi, Kenya



# Thank you



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Johan Robinson  
Ecosystem Integration Branch Director  
UNEP  
[johan.robinson@un.org](mailto:johan.robinson@un.org)

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United Nations Avenue, Gigiri  
PO Box 30552 – 00100 GPO Nairobi, Kenya

[www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)