



Distr. LIMITED

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.48/INF.9
30 September 2023

Original: ENGLISH

Twentieth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Seventeenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.

Oranjestad, Aruba, 5 October 2023

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 10TH ORDINARY RAC-REMPEITC-CARIBE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

For reasons of economy and the environment, Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies of the Working and Information documents to the Meeting, and not to request additional copies.

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Annex I. Recommendations of the Meeting

The Steering Committee:

Having convened the Tenth Meeting of the Steering Committee of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe;

Referring to the Recommendations of the Ninth Meeting of the Steering Committee of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe;

Considering the Obligations that still remain of the Protocol Regarding Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills of the same Convention;

Further considering the recent entry into force of the Ballast Water Convention and increased efforts within the Wider Caribbean Region to comply with the MARPOL, OPRC and other related IMO administered Conventions and Regional Codes and Agreements;

Noting the social and ecological value of the region's healthy coastal and marine ecosystems, including beaches, coral reefs, mangroves and sea grass beds and the continued risks posed by oil spills, ballast water and marine litter/plastics from both marine and land-based activities.

Noting with concern the changing risk profile of the Wider Caribbean Region with respect to oil spills from ships and offshore oil and gas activities.

Having reviewed the Draft Biennial Work Plan of the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe and other documents and workshop recommendations submitted to this Steering Committee by RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe;

Recommends to the 19th Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Program and the 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Cartagena Convention to:

General

1. Review and endorse these recommendations of the 10th Meeting of the Steering Committee.
2. Endorse the 2022 – 2023 work plans.
3. Acknowledge the support of the Government of Curacao, UN Environment, IMO, US Coast Guard, Jamaica Defence Force, Governments of Netherlands and Trinidad and Tobago, IPEICA and the many agency partners to ensure the sustainability of the Centre and for its work in the Wider Caribbean Region.

4. Commend the continuing efforts by the Government of Curacao to finalize the recruitment of the full time Director as well as the legal framework which will allow the Centre to enter into independent partnership agreements.
5. Acknowledge the extensive work programme and activities conducted by the Centre during 2018-2022 and congratulate all staff for their efforts under challenging circumstances.
6. Commend the work of the outgoing consultant LCDR. Matthew Richards, and LCDR Floyd Patterson, as well as IPIECA consultant Roberto San Martin, and welcome the two new Consultants, from the US Coast Guard – LCDR Lukas Rodriguez, and Ms. Nadia Gour from Trinidad and Tobago.
7. Encourage Governments and Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and Oil Spills Protocol as well as Agency Partners to provide financial, technical and/or human support for ongoing activities including identifying future secondments of personnel to the Centre.
8. Seek to ensure the Contracting Parties are represented at future RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe Steering Committee Meetings by a Member of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties and the President of the Monitoring Committee, as required by the Terms of Reference of the Centre's Steering Committee.
9. Note that RAC-REMPEITC-Caribe will continue to use virtual attendance technologies to facilitate the widest possible participation in future meetings of the Steering Committee.
10. Encourages all partners to support efforts to increase the visibility of the work of the Centre through the continued development of the newly launched RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe web site.
11. Encourage continued efforts by RAC REMPEITC and the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention to facilitate greater cooperation among the Regional Activity Centres for Land-Based Pollution and Marine Biodiversity, as well as promoting greater interaction between maritime and environmental agencies on topics of common interest including *inter alia* waste (plastics) management and the detection of oil spills and sargassum.
12. Recognize the significant contributions of industry, maritime institutes and non-governmental organization partners present at the meeting, note their offers of support and partnership to the work of the Centre, and encourage RAC REMPTTEIC to incorporate, to the extent possible,

into the 2022-2023 Work Plan.

13. Acknowledge various regional efforts to provide capacity building and training in the region that are not always effectively coordinated and recommend that COCATRAM and RAC REMPEITC Caribe in particular attempt to collaborate both on the development of respective work plans and in the delivery of training activities.
14. To capitalize on the newly launched virtual platform to ensure more outreach and also make more reading material available.

Strategic Plan of RAC/REMPEITC Caribe

15. Conduct a further review and evaluation of the Mission, Vision and Values, and Outcomes of the Strategic Plan of the Centre to ensure it fully reflects the scope and work of the Centre moving forward and is consistent with the scope of Cartagena Convention and Oil Spills Protocol in addressing oil pollution threats beyond ships.
16. Ensure that existing, ongoing and proposed regional strategies and plans are reflected and/or updated in the Outcomes of the overall Strategic Plan for the Centre.
17. Welcome the recent updates of the Memorandum of Understanding between the US Coast Guard and the International Maritime Organization, which will ensure the continued provision of technical and financial assistance to the Centre.
18. RAC REMPEITC Caribe in collaboration with Member States, UN Environment and IMO to prepare a prioritized list of actions that will assist Governments and Agency Partners identify possible areas for collaboration and /or provision of support.
19. Endorse the need to have a formal instrument to engage new partners and for UN Environment, IMO and Member Governments to further review and refine the Draft Partnership Template to facilitate future partnerships with various sectors including the private sector.

Ballast Water

20. Encourage the Regional Task Force to continue its efforts to promote the ratification and implementation of the IMO Convention on Ballast Water Management.
21. Ensure a more scientific approach towards this study on combating of the Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease.

22. Lobby for more stringent enforcement and research of the Ballast Water Management regulations to the Port State Control personnel.

OPRC

23. To consider how best to strengthen the cooperation and partnerships between agencies involved in oil spill response planning in the Wider Caribbean Region including through bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation mechanisms and agreements.
24. Encourage more activities geared towards accession (NCP/OPRC/RETOS) to be followed by more regional and national exercises.
25. To take advantage of the NCP template that will be made available by RAC/REMPEITC to help standardize NCP format within the Wider Caribbean Region.
26. To continue to push forward as a region to become better prepared for oil spill by creating or updating Oil Spill National Contingency Plans.
27. To utilize the risk analysis results from the strategic working group to prioritize the training and support provided to the countries and territories of the Wider Caribbean Region.
28. To support NOAA's initiative to further expand the Oil Spill Monitoring Program footprint by getting more countries or territories involved/trained.
29. Endorses the specific recommendations identified in 10/15 and to incorporate these into the 2022-2023 Work Plan and future amendments to the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe Long Term Strategic Plan.
30. Further notes the importance afforded to the following activities:
 - (i) Regional Risk Assessments;
 - (ii) Improving, updating and incorporating off-shore activities into regional plans;
 - (iii) Establishing a regional response advisory team;
 - (iv) Fully Establishing RAC REMPEITC as a regional spill reporting, notification and coordination centre with regional online information platform;
 - (v) Supporting Governments in conducting exercises and developing mutual assistance agreements (bilateral and multilateral).

MARPOL

31. Ensure more outreach through lobbying nationally and regionally on these areas to create more public awareness at all levels.

32. States parties to the MARPOL convention should take the steps necessary to implement MARPOL Annex VI.