



Distr. LIMITED

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/6
29 August 2025

Original: ENGLISH

Seventh Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean.

Virtual, 22-25 July 2025

DRAFT REPORT OF THE MEETING

This meeting is being convened virtually. Delegates are kindly requested to access all meeting documents electronically for download as necessary.

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ACRONYMS

ACP MEA	African, Caribbean and Pacific States, Multilateral Environmental Agreements Project
AMEP	Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution
CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme
CETA	Communication, Education, Training and Awareness
CTF	Caribbean Trust Fund
COP	Conference of Parties
CIMAB	Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport
CLME+	Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystems+ project
CRew+	Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management+ project
EU	European Union
GCFI	Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPA	Global Programme of Action
HOD	Head of Delegation
HQ	Headquarters
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IGM	Intergovernmental Meeting
IMA	Institute of Marine Affairs
IWEco	Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States
LBS	Land-Based Sources of Pollution
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
OEWG	Open-Ended Working Group
RAC	Regional Activity Centre
RAN	Regional Activity Network
REMPEITC	The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOCAR	State of the Convention Area
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
STAC	Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USA	United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Meeting Objectives	1
AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING OF THE MEETING.....	1
1.1 Welcome	1
AGENDA ITEM 2: ELECTION OF OFFICERS.....	2
2.1 Opening Remarks of the President.....	2
3.1 Rules of Procedure	3
3.2 Organization of the work.....	3
AGENDA ITEM 4: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA	4
AGENDA ITEM 5: REVIEW OF THE AMEP SUB-PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD 2023-2025	3
AGENDA ITEM 6: INFORMATION PAPERS	7
AGENDA ITEM 9: OTHER BUSINESS.....	22
AGENDA ITEM 11: CLOSURE OF THE MEETING	26
The Annexes	32
<u>Annex I: Provisional Agenda.</u>	
<u>Annex II: Provisional List of Documents</u>	
<u>Annex III: Recommendations of the Meeting</u>	
Annex IV: List of Participants	
Rapporteur's notes	

REPORT OF THE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

Meeting Objectives

The objectives of the Seventh LBS STAC Meeting were to:

- Evaluate the projects and activities implemented by the Secretariat and the LBS Regional Activity Centres (RACs) within the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) Sub-Programme during the period 2023-2025;
- Review the progress made in the implementation of the Recommendations of the Sixth LBS STAC Meeting, Decisions of the Sixth Conference of Parties to the LBS Protocol, and relevant Decisions of the Seventeenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention;
- Review the status of ratification and/or implementation of the LBS Protocol in member countries;
- Review and provide technical input to the Draft AMEP Work Plan for the 2026-2027 biennium for subsequent submission to, and approval by, the Seventh Conference of Parties to the LBS Protocol; and
- Provide recommendations concerning the implementation of the LBS Protocol for consideration by the Seventh Conference of Parties to the LBS Protocol.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING OF THE MEETING.

1.1 Welcome

1. The meeting was officially opened on Tuesday, July 22, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. (GMT-5) by Ms. Laverne Walker, Marine Pollution Programme Management Officer of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat.
2. Mr. Christopher Corbin, Coordinator of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, and Mr. Alberto Pacheco Capella, the newly appointed Head of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme, delivered the welcome and opening remarks respectively.
3. In welcoming the delegates Mr. Corbin indicated that their presence was a testament to the shared commitment of our region to safeguard the marine and coastal environment of the Wider Caribbean Region. He also expressed a warm welcome to the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis to the meeting as the sixteenth Contracting Party to the LBS Protocol. He stated that the gathering reaffirmed science-based cooperation in tackling marine pollution and highlighted regional progress in circular management of wastewater, waste, and plastics via initiatives like GEF CReW+, GEF LAC Cities, and PROMAR; and that the Secretariat remained committed to providing technical assistance, capacity building, policy development, and expertise.
4. He outlined the key meeting agenda focal areas and underscored strategic priorities including the adoption of the Regional Strategy 2023–2030, new Resource Mobilization and

Communications and Marketing Plans, updated RAC/RAN guidelines, and governance improvements.

5. Given imminent funding constraints he urged Parties to timely fulfill Trust Fund contributions and consider endorsing the hosting COPs in October in Jamaica whilst acknowledging the gracious offer from Grenada. He concluded with a call for everyone to work together to strengthen pollution control and marine protection.
6. Mr. Alberto Pachecho Capella congratulated St. Kitts and Nevis on their recent ratification of the LBS Protocol, underscoring the growing commitment to the region's environmental health and encouraged other outstanding parties to secure their ratifications. He highlighted the importance of circular economy approaches and the opportunities they provide for sustainable livelihoods. He encouraged the strengthening of renewed partnerships noting that sargassum and nutrient pollution required multi-sectoral solutions with greater private sector involvement.
7. Remarking that pollution was a global crisis requiring regional solutions, Mr. Pachecho Capello cited pertinent related Conventions supporting and addressing this major environmental concern. He urged stronger collaborations among Contracting Parties to effectively advance the goals of the LBS Protocol of the Cartagena Convention.
8. He called on Parties to support the Secretariat's quest to operate stably reminding that the financial health of the organization depended on the predictable and sustainable financial support of parties. He concluded his remarks with good wishes for a successful meeting.
9. Ms. Walker thanked Messrs. Corbin and Pachecho. She acknowledged the work of the Regional Seas OSPAR and Abijan Conventions and indicated that the Secretariat was working closely with them on a number of initiatives.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

10. The Meeting elected from among the Parties Bureau Members - a President, two Vice Presidents, and a Rapporteur for the conduct of the Meeting following proposals for nominations received and submitted by the Secretariat. They were all elected by acclamation.
 - a. **President:** Antigua and Barbuda
 - b. **1st Vice President:** St Kitts and Nevis
 - c. **2nd Vice President:** Dominican Republic
 - d. **Rapporteur:** France
11. Ms. Walker warmly welcomed the new Bureau Members to the Meeting.
12. The President assumed the Chair for the meeting with support from the Secretariat.

2.1 Opening Remarks of the President

13. The President warmly greeted everyone. He thanked the Secretariat for their hard work, welcomed and thanked Mr. Corbin and Mr. Pacheco for their remarks and pledged support. He advised that a lot of technical work was done in the past biennium and looked forward to advancing this work to implement the charge under the Cartagena Convention. He

congratulated the new Bureau and expressed appreciation for the honour of chairing the Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 3: ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

3.1 Rules of Procedure

14. The President outlined the rules of procedure and organization of work for the meeting.
15. The rules of procedure for meetings of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) as contained in (UNEP 2010) and adopted pursuant to Article 20 of the Cartagena Convention were applied for the conduct of the Meeting.

3.2 Organization of the work

16. English, French, and Spanish were the working languages of the Meeting. Simultaneous interpretation in these languages was provided for the Meeting. The working documents of the Meeting were available in all three languages.
17. The Secretariat proposed convening the Meeting in plenary sessions, with the assistance of working groups. The President may also establish other working groups. Simultaneous interpretation would not be available for the working groups.
18. The President encouraged full collaboration in all decision-making.

AGENDA ITEM 4: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

19. The President pointed delegates to the provisional agenda and invited comments from the plenary. There being no recommendations for adjustments, the agenda was adopted without amendment. (The Provisional Agenda is contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/1 and the Provisional Annotated Agenda in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/2.)

AGENDA ITEM 5: REVIEW OF THE AMEP SUB-PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD 2023-2025

20. **The President invited Ms. Laverne Walker of the Secretariat to present the AMEP Status of Activities for the 2023-2025 biennium.**
21. She presented the AMEP Sub-Programme activities for the 2023-2025 period; highlighted the status of LBS Protocol ratifications as provided by the Government of Colombia, as Depositary for the Cartagena Convention and as provided in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/INF.3; as well as progress on projects and activities, and the implementation of recommendations from the 6th LBS STAC and decisions from the 6th LBS COP as outlined in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/INF.4.
22. Ms. Walker stated that a significant achievement was the ratification of the LBS protocol by St. Kitts and Nevis, becoming the 16th Contracting Party. She called on other pending countries to sign on and advised that promotional efforts continue to encourage ratifications including meetings in Cuba, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.
23. Ms. Walker disclosed that the period saw the successful close out of the GEF IWECO Project, and the launch of several crucial projects, including Prevention of Marine Litter in

the Caribbean (PROMAR) financed by the Government of Germany in partnership with Adelphi; GEF LAC Cities being implemented in across 6 cities in 3 countries; the US EPA Water Quality Capacity Development Project which focuses on improving national water quality monitoring programmes; the UK's Sustainable Blue Economy Programme being implemented by CEFAS recently launched in Guyana and Jamaica; and EBM projects under ACP MEA III.

24. She revealed that progress was also made in developing technical proposed guidelines for wastewater and nutrient management and enhancing regional monitoring capabilities through new data platforms. The Secretariat also strengthened collaborations with partners, hosted capacity building programmes such as the recent joint monitoring and assessment Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Sargassum Working Group Meeting to address emerging threats like Sargassum. These comprehensive activities, supported by significant resource mobilization, knowledge management and information outreach underscored a committed regional effort to combat marine pollution through integrated management and cooperation.
25. **Comments on The AMEP Sub-Programme of Activities for the Period 2023-2025**
26. The President thanked Ms. Walker for her presentation and invited comments from the Parties.
27. **The USA** thanked the Secretariat for hosting the meeting and advised that they appreciated the materials shared to orient attendees to the meeting. Noting that several documents were posted to the website that were unrelated to the agenda, they suggested that documents could be grouped based on the agenda.
28. They thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and commended the significant breadth of work achieved.
29. They also congratulated the Government of St Kitts and Nevis on their ratification of the LBS protocol and encouraged other parties to do the same to accord their countries of the many benefits.
30. They noted the many improvements made despite staffing shortages. They welcomed the revised TOR on the OEWG. They agreed there was an opportunity to do more on Sargassum management. They thanked the Secretariat for the work done on nutrients. They noted that many activities were partially complete and needed continued focus and attention. The representative from the US thanked Trinidad and Tobago for hosting the Sargassum meeting and acknowledged the work done. They acknowledged that additional work was needed to advance the draft Sargassum Action Plan, preferably prior to the meetings of the COPs. They also opined that more work was needed on RAC and RAN guidelines.
31. **The Secretariat** advised that following on the SPAW STAC, comments were still being received regarding the Sargassum Action plan and noted that the Secretariat was considering a Pre-COP meeting to advance the discussions. The SPAW Programme Management Officer, indicated that the proposal was to host a pre-COP by mid-September. Mr. Chris Corbin, projected that the COP meetings are being projected for the 2nd week of October, once the extended Bureau endorses, and that based on internal meetings it would be good to have preliminary discussions ahead of the COPs with SPAW and LBS Focal Points.

32. **France** congratulated the President and thanked the Secretariat for its work and dedication.
33. **Jamaica** congratulated the Secretariat on the status report presentation and indicated it was looking forward to working with UNEP on key related items. They expressed appreciation for having benefitted from various initiatives. Commenting on the many plastics related projects, they inquired about the role of the Secretariat and the Convention regarding the upcoming INC 5 negotiations on plastic pollution.
34. **The Secretariat** advised that the Secretariat's work in plastics had a long history. In previous workplans the Secretariat was tasked with supporting Contracting Parties as part of the INC negotiation process. Mr. Corbin stated that the Secretariat had prepared a document that addressed plastic pollution in the region. As they had not yet received a strong mandate re same, they now needed the guidance of Parties for potential high-level engagements. He also cited the GEF LAC Cities and PROMAR Projects, as examples of partnerships to support related activities under regional projects.
35. **Trinidad and Tobago** congratulated the Bureau and Secretariat for the achievements during the 2023-25 period. They referenced the Sargassum action plan noting that the OEWG, Sargassum thematic subgroup had contributed to its development. They noted the US delegate's comment regarding additional work needed on the action plan and asked whether a meeting of the SPAW Sargassum working group should be convened.
36. **The Foundation for Development Planning** cited the SOCAR report noting that its scope in previous assessments focused on LBS and pollution issues. The representative inquired about the scope of the proposed new SOCAR, asking if the agreed parameters to be assessed would be across the Wider Caribbean Region and whether resources could be made available.
37. **The Secretariat** advised that the scope would be defined by the OEWG and that an approach towards a more integrated SOCAR focusing on marine pollution and marine habitats was not yet fully defined.
38. **Mr. Corbin** advised that the previous State of Convention Area Report (SOCAR) and State of Marine Habitats Report were funded with the support of projects. He also noted that based on the request by Contracting Parties to provide greater integration of the two reports, the Secretariat was seeking financial assistance to support its development.

LBS Regional Activity Centres Status of Activities presentations

39. The two LBS Regional Activity Centres (RACs) were invited as part of the Secretariat's presentation, to report on their activities in support of the LBS Protocol (**UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/INF.5**). The Institute of Marine Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago (RAC-IMA) and the (RAC-CIMAB-Cuba) delivered the presentations respectively.
40. **Dr. Darryl Banjoo of the IMA** revealed that as a leading marine research institute in Trinidad and Tobago, the IMA has been instrumental in advancing the region's environmental goals. For the period under review, the IMA's work focused on several critical areas. They have led the development of guidelines for water classification and established regional standards for nutrient loads in wastewater, with support from RAC-CIMAB and funding from GEF CReW+; and have been supportive in promoting the LBS Protocol ratification among non-contracting parties.

41. A major highlight was hosting the Joint Monitoring and Assessment (OEWG) and Sargassum Working Group Meeting in March 2025. This crucial workshop enhanced collaboration between the AMEP and SPAW sub-programmes, addressing the interconnected challenges of sargassum influxes and nutrient pollution. The RAC-IMA is also actively engaged in projects like PROMAR to combat marine litter and has expanded its oil spill remote sensing capabilities to better serve the Caribbean. Through these diverse initiatives, the IMA provides vital technical and scientific support to the Cartagena Convention, reinforcing its commitment to protecting the region's marine environment.
42. **Marlen Perez Hernández of RAC-CIMAB** stated that key accomplishments for 2023-2025 included supporting RAC-IMA in advancing technical information papers to be further discussed during this meeting including developing guidelines for marine-coastal water classification and drafting proposed regional standards for nitrogen and phosphorus from industrial and domestic sources.
43. For the 2024-2025 period, activities have focused on promoting the ratification of the LBS Protocol, implementing training on innovative wastewater management, and strengthening institutional capacities. A significant national workshop on the challenges and perspectives of the LBS Protocol was held in Havana in February 2024, and a seminar on wastewater treatment techniques took place in Panama in January 2024. A major ongoing project is the development of a Nutrient Management Strategy for the Havana Bay watershed. Additionally, the national project for monitoring the environmental quality of Cuba's main Bays continues. These activities align with strategic objectives of preventing marine pollution and managing nutrients.
44. **The President invited the Government of Trinidad and Tobago as Chair of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment to report on the working group's activities UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/INF.6.**

Report of the OEWG

45. **Dr. Darryl Banjoo, (Trinidad and Tobago)** the OEWG Chair reported on the significant progress made during the 2023-2025 period. Comprising 42 experts from 17 countries, the OEWG and its thematic sub-groups on nutrients, wastewater, and emerging issues like microplastics and sargassum, convened several meetings to advance their mandate.
46. Key activities included updating the OEWG's Terms of Reference and reviewing critical technical documents, such as the "Guidelines for the Classification of Marine Waters" and the "Regional Criteria and Standards for N and P Loads." The group was also instrumental in contributing to the Sargassum Survey Report and the integrated Sargassum Action Plan, highlighting a strong collaborative approach with the SPAW Protocol.
47. The OEWG proposed several key recommendations to the LBS STAC for consideration. These included conducting a desktop study on the implementation of national water classification schemes and developing harmonized monitoring recommendations for pollutants. The group also emphasized the need to continue addressing sargassum inundations within the LBS framework and to explore opportunities for establishing a regional consortium of laboratories.

Comments on the RACs' Presentations

48. The President thanked RACs' IMA and CIMAB, as well as the Chair of the OEWG for their presentations.
49. The President invited delegates to comment and/or seek additional clarification on any of the projects and activities implemented during the biennium and make recommendations, as appropriate.
50. **The Secretariat** confirmed its intention to hold preliminary discussions with Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) and LBS focal points on pressing issues like sargassum management ahead of the COP.

AGENDA ITEM 6: INFORMATION PAPERS

51. The President invited the Regional Activity Centres-CIMAB and IMA to present the following information papers for discussion and recommendations on the way forward:
Draft guidelines for the classification of waters: UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.44/INF.16 Rev.1
52. **Dr. Maurice Narcis of the RAC-IMA** outlined the development of guidelines for classifying waters in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) under the Land-Based Sources (LBS) Protocol. The study, conducted by the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) with support from RAC-CIMAB, assessed the water classification systems of 20 English and Spanish-speaking countries.
53. The methodology involved circulating a questionnaire to LBS focal points and conducting a desktop review of legal instruments like laws and standards. Findings show that water classification in the Wider Caribbean Region is typically based on designated use (e.g., recreation, aquatic life support) or function. While 13 of the assessed countries (65%) classify their coastal waters, only Jamaica and Belize have explicitly incorporated the LBS Protocol's Class I and Class II definitions into their national legislation.
54. Dr. Narcis noted that most national systems are compatible with the LBS Protocol. Drawing on these regional systems and external examples from the Philippines and South Africa, the project developed proposed guidelines and recommendations for use across the region.
55. The President thanked Dr. Narcis and invited comments from the floor.
56. **Comments on draft guidelines for the classification of waters:**
57. The guidelines for classification of waters according to the LBS Protocol, generated extensive debate. The core of the issue was the lack of clear definitions within the Protocol for terms such as "water body," "inland waters," and the distinction between "coastal and marine waters".
58. **Jamaica** thanked Dr. Narcis for the presentation. They inquired about the ways countries classify their waters, and what could be done to make the classifications more effective.
59. **The USA** acknowledged that a lot of work was done on this technical information document and that the topic required further discussion. They advised they had made technical comments to earlier drafts of the paper and that they did not support the draft guidelines

being recommended, and that more time was required to review the recommendations and seek further clarification where necessary. They, however, could support forwarding the topic for continued discussion within the OEWG. They recommended an inter-sessional comment period to further review the recommendations.

60. **France** as a complement, provided further insight into how it managed water quality through a system of designated zones.
61. Under the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, "sensitive areas" are identified to combat eutrophication, requiring stricter limits on nitrogen and phosphorus from wastewater plants comply with the thresholds set by the 2015 ministerial order. An upcoming revision which will also be transposed to French law will add zones for "micropollutant concerns," mandating advanced treatment funded by industries like cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.
62. For agricultural pollution, the Nitrates Directive defines "vulnerable zones." Public health is addressed through the Bathing Water Directive, which classifies bathing sites based on bacterial levels (e.g. based in particular on concentrations of intestinal enterococci and *Escherichia coli* - *E. coli*), and the Hygiene Package, which classifies shellfish production areas.
63. These various classifications are integrated under the overarching Water Framework Directive (WFD). The WFD assesses the overall chemical and ecological health of water bodies and maintains a "register of protected areas." This register includes the zones established under the other directives, ensuring these specific areas meet their unique environmental objectives and regulatory thresholds. This multi-layered approach allows for targeted management and protection of France's diverse water environments.
64. **The Secretariat –Laverne Walker** advised that Contracting Parties as required by protocol are to classify their waters. She noted that although a survey was administered to LBS Focal Points, response was low and that a lot of the information used to advance the technical information report was obtained by desk top assessments undertaken by RACs IMA and CIMAB of the English and Spanish speaking countries. She thanked France for sharing their detailed framework noting that France was not assessed when the study was conducted. She advised that the study need not be enforced but was rather shared to offer some guidelines for classification which Contracting Parties may consider /use as a roadmap when classifying their own coastal and marine waters.
65. **Trinidad and Tobago** suggested that a definition is needed for *water body* as the LBS Protocol does not have a definitive definition. Regarding the 2nd recommendation outlined in the presentation for classification of waters, a term used in the LBS Protocol, the Protocol does not delineate between coastal and other waters. They suggested a clear definition when referencing a water body.
66. **RAC-CIMAB** supported the presentation by RAC-IMA and indicated that the first recommendation is related to the need for additional studies to know the level of REAL IMPLEMENTATION of the water classification in selected countries in accordance with their own regulations and to learn about their successes and challenges.
67. **Jamaica** stated that *the definition* for marine and coastal waters was based on the Convention. Individual countries could consider inland areas as well. However, it depended on the country and the necessities of each country.

68. **The Dominican Republic** asserted that the issue was highly complex due to diverse national classification systems and the significant legal and practical implications of adopting regional standards. They strongly advocated deeper discussions at the national level before proceeding.

69. The President thanked delegates for their inputs.

Regional criteria and standards for Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P) loads in domestic and industrial wastewater discharges

70. **The President invited Dr. Maurice Narcis of RAC-IMA to present on** Regional criteria and standards for Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P) loads in domestic and industrial wastewater discharges: UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.44/INF.17 Rev.1.

71. Dr. Narcis outlined the research project which aimed to define proposed regional criteria for Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P) loads in domestic and industrial wastewater discharges within the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR). The study reviewed the existing standards in 20 English and Spanish-speaking countries through questionnaires and a detailed analysis of their legal frameworks.

72. The report identified N and P as key nutrients that cause eutrophication, a significant environmental problem where excess algal growth depletes oxygen in the water. A review of existing national regulations for both domestic and industrial wastewater revealed a wide and inconsistent range of effluent limits for various forms of N and P across the WCR.

73. In his presentation, Dr. Narcis also proposed that the 7 LBS STAC may wish to consider utilizing total nitrogen (TN), total phosphorous (TP) and Total Kjeldahl nitrogen (TKN) as the nutrient parameters for the regional criteria/limits for domestic wastewater discharges in marine and coastal areas

74. Based on the analysis, the presentation proposed a standardized set of Maximum Permissible Limits for the Parties' consideration, tied to the LBS Protocol's water classification system.

- For **Class I** waters (more sensitive), the proposed limits are **0.1-5 mg/L** for Total Phosphorus (TP) and **1-10 mg/L** for Total Nitrogen (TN).
- For **Class II** waters, the recommended limits are **5-10 mg/L** for TP and **10-50 mg/L** for TN.

75. The President thanked Dr. Narcis for his presentation.

76. The President opened the floor for comments on the presentation.

Comments- Regional Criteria and Standards for Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P) Loads in Domestic and Industrial Wastewater Discharges.

78. **Jamaica** thanked Dr. Narcis and expressed satisfaction with the presentation stating that it was well done. They noted the various iterations in terms of the revision and that their previous inputs had been incorporated. They believed that the proposed standards for industrial and domestic waste were workable.

79. **Trinidad and Tobago** indicated that considering the location of their domestic treatment plants in cases where they are located near inland waters their preferred terminology would be for water bodies.

80. **The USA** supported identification of ways to standardize measurements of nitrogen and phosphorus across countries in the WCR but acknowledged that more time was needed to discuss the feasibility of these proposed ranges, especially given that the technical paper had gone through several iterations.
81. They noted that this was the first time the STAC had seen this particular range of values. They advised that they along with the Parties would still need time to consult amongst experts and other government officials in their home countries before being able to endorse such parameters or ranges.
82. They acknowledged the incremental steps being taken to address the issue such as non-uniformity and raised the idea that experts within various departments would need time to be consulted as to whether such ecosystems are functioning properly, and how such proposals would fit into these ecosystems as well. They wanted to know how the ranges were formulated, and why, especially as it may relate to the operation of subnational governments, which was the case for the United States. They pointed to the need for increased monitoring and assessment efforts to understand the state of various ecosystems, and what the most appropriate ranges would be.
83. They also indicated that they would submit in writing further considerations for some of the recommendations proposed. Regarding the recommendations that were being presented to the STAC and the recommendations being presented to the Parties they asked how they may interpret that.
84. **Barbados** stated that they needed more time to go through the presentation. They liked and endorsed the separation of the domestic waste standards from the industrial wastewater and that the standards also reflected the importance of water bodies and the impact the discharge can have on sensitive ecosystems. They also reported that they were very happy with the work but needed some more internal reviews with their various stakeholders.
85. **The Secretariat-Laverne Walker** advised that the matter was discussed in the Open-Ended Working Group, and acknowledged that some of these things would have just been seen by some Contracting Parties in the last few weeks. They anticipated that further review would be needed.
86. **The President** affirmed that general comments from colleagues pointed to the need for more time to evaluate the findings of the report, and that the recommendations emanating from the STAC would be forwarded to the COP for consideration. Recommendations in the report would need to be refined to determine how to treat the suggested guidelines going forward on the limits proposed.
87. **The Secretariat- Christopher Corbin** welcomed the various feedback indicating that this would help achieve the goal of the LBS Protocol and the Cartagena Convention. He suggested for the further consideration of Parties regarding the recommendations from the RACs that an indicative timeline be considered for when this further work will happen in terms of discussions, both at the national level and on behalf of the Secretariat. He also recommended that Parties consider having some form of regional technical expert workshop during the next biennium subject to the availability of financial resources.
88. Mr. Corbin acknowledged that the matter of limits was a very sensitive matter, and was an important discussion point which would help the Secretariat assess discharges in the

Convention Area. Regarding the terminology of *bodies of water*, he suggested framing the discussion around the "Convention Area" as a pragmatic way to move forward as it would be difficult to capture all the nuances at the national /country framework. He clarified that while technical workshops could facilitate further discussion, any formal decision on new definitions would ultimately rest with the COP. The Secretariat stands ready to facilitate whatever recommendation comes forward from this meeting to the COP.

89. The President thanked the Coordinator for his reflections and advised that they would inform next steps.
90. **RAC-CIMAB** expressed appreciation for all the positive comments, suggestions and discussions. They agreed and understood the need for Contracting Parties to have time to analyze the different proposals re limits and nitrogen discharges. They support and endorse capacity development workshops with experts to continue and to inform the motif scheme and the recommendation by Chris Corbin re the terminology re marine coastal areas to be /mean the area of the application of the Convention. These specifications should be left for domestic standards for each of the countries. They were not in agreement in using *body of water* which could mean inland bodies of water which are not in the protocol itself. They understood the concern raised by the USA about the need for more time to analyze/evaluate the proposed recommendations, and that the issues which are complex and technical require the participation of experts, politicians, and decision –makers.
91. **Trinidad and Tobago** endorsed the technical workshop to advance the process and the stated approach by Mr. Corbin for defining the Convention area.
92. **Guyana** expressed appreciation of the definition and qualifications of terminologies.
93. **Dr. Narcis RAC-IMA** highlighted that one of the reasons why the parameters were being suggested for total nitrogen and total phosphorus was because there are many different forms of nitrogen and phosphorus. These parameters are all encompassing accounting for all forms of nitrogen, and phosphorus (encompassing every single chemical parameter or indicator) if analyzed.
94. **Antigua & Barbuda** requested clarity on the differentiation between the total Kjeldahl nitrogen and the total nitrogen.
95. **RAC-IMA – Dr Narcis** explained that the process of total kjeldahl nitrogen would be to account for specifically the ammonia, or ammonia compounds within wastewater, and with respect to the wastewater treatment process. Total kjeldahl is used as a monitoring tool to ensure that these types would be well treated for and no longer exist in the water that is discharged out of the treatment system. It is also related to organic and inorganic forms of nitrogen.
96. **Trinidad and Tobago** also provided related formulae below.

TKN (Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen) = Total organic nitrogen + ammonium

Total organic nitrogen = TKN – ammonium

Total inorganic nitrogen = (nitrate + nitrite) + ammonium

TN (Total Nitrogen) = TKN + Nitrate + Nitrite

97. **Antigua & Barbuda** thanked Dr. Narcis for his clarification.
98. **RAC CIMAB Marlen Perez Hernández** proposed including in the report a summary of the difference between the two indicators: TN and TKN. TN includes all forms of nitrogen, both organic and inorganic. TKN includes organic nitrogen and ammonium but does not include nitrate or nitrite. However, TKN is the most commonly used indicator for assessing wastewater quality. She also advised that the matter having been so well addressed by Dr. Narcis, they could add a footnote in the document to address this differentiation. They also favoured the organization of a technical group
99. **The USA** stated they could not support the ranges as presented at this time, because they needed more time to discuss, given that it is a complex issue. They also needed more time to reflect on the proposed workshop but could support continued discussions on this issue. They would also think of suitable ways of doing so and will submit further in writing.
100. **Antigua & Barbuda** indicated that the recommendations would need to be amended, to ensure how to treat with the report and the need to discuss nutrient parameters going forward.
101. **Trinidad and Tobago** observed that the recommendation was based on the LBS protocol. Noting that another pending agenda item that deals with the amendment of the LBS protocol in terms of clarifying different issues based on the present discussion, they also saw the importance that these issues needed to be first clarified in terms of the LBS Protocol to substantiate potential recommendations. They suggested a technical workshop to address the issue of the amendments of the LBS Protocol especially in terms of a definition which was probably lacking in the documents. They also suggested that precise definitions were needed in terms of zones. When referring to waters - waters that are inland which have the potential to contaminate coastal areas—a precise definition between what is designated as coastal areas and marine areas to support the implementation of these recommendations. The technical report should also address the issue of definitions and the scope that could be dealt with in the proposed technical workshop.
102. **The Secretariat - Christopher Corbin** thanked all Contracting Parties for the constructive suggestions as to technically how to proceed. He opined that it was important to see what enabling things needed to be done to allow various recommendations regarding specific aspects as previously mentioned. He asserted that a technical expert workshop might not be the best route to take as far as amendments to the Protocol or amendments to annexes or additional annexes. He stated that the technical meeting, could identify the specific areas to be addressed but ultimately decisions in terms of amendments, new annexes, new definitions would probably best be placed within the ambit of the Conference of Parties who may wish to consider other modalities and pursue other options available to them.
103. **France** welcomed the work carried out by the RAC-IMA and advised that they will respond with a written contribution following the STAC. France supports the establishment of a Working Group focused on defining the relevant parameters and thresholds to be implemented. France has already put in place dedicated regulations and monitoring. They also wanted to take some parameters into consideration and asked about the different ways of establishing limits.
104. **Guyana** expressed appreciation for the comprehensive presentation. They revealed that Guyana has Industrial Effluent Discharge Limits (albeit interim) and that they include the

nutrient parameters in the forms indicated in the presentation. They also observed that Guyana was not listed among the countries with limits. Guyana welcomed the recommended guidelines as they continue to build their repository of data via a stringent monitoring programme to finalize their guidelines.

105. **The Secretariat –Laverne Walker-** Following on the USA’s remarks regarding recommendations to STAC concerning the utilization of total nitrogen and phosphorus, stated that the Secretariat wanted to know if the matter of parameters was a matter that needed to be discussed at a technical level with more workshops. She also inquired if Contracting Parties were prepared to acknowledge the content of the report as it relates to total phosphorus and nitrogen.
106. **Trinidad and Tobago** advised that the recommendation is based on the LBS Protocol. Regarding the amendment of the Protocol, they suggested that the issues be clarified to substantiate the recommendations. The technical workshop could address this concern especially definitions re the delineation of zones, waters, coastal and marine areas.
107. **The Dominican Republic** asserted that the issue is diverse in terms of classification and parameters, as well as with the implications that may arise when adopting such parameters. Defining coastal waters would mean adopting the criteria set forth in the Convention and Protocol, as well as the delimitations recognized by the various countries in the region. They proposed deeper discussion at the national level with various stakeholders, given the complexity of wastewater and industrial water issues. The envisaged national workshops followed by integration of the topic into the 2026–2027 Plan, with a view to organizing a regional event on the subject.
108. **Grenada** advised that immediately following this STAC Meeting, they welcomed the opportunity to access, review the report, the key findings and recommendations with support from a multi-stakeholder/OEWG. They agreed with the suggestions for more discussions at the national and regional levels relating to Industrial Effluent Limits and Standards.
109. **The President** acknowledged the request by several parties that they needed more time to review the recommendations. He advised that there would be a need to precisely delineate what the recommendation going forward would be. He thanked the delegates for their interventions.

Recommendations for amendments to the LBS Protocol to facilitate increased reuse of domestic wastewater including adoption of new criteria or standards for domestic wastewater discharges UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/INF.13

110. **The President invited Ms. Marle Perez Hernández^[OB] of RAC-CIMAB to present the Recommendations for amendments to the LBS Protocol to facilitate increased reuse of domestic wastewater including adoption of new criteria or standards for domestic wastewater discharges UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/INF.13.**
111. Ms. Perez Hernández outlined twelve proposed amendments to the Annexes of the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) of the Cartagena Convention. The rationale for these updates included the Protocol's age (over 25 years since its drafting) and the need to address new global challenges and harmonize them with national regulations. The RAC-CIMAB representative noted that these were all recommendations which needed to be further reviewed and discussed by Contracting Parties.

112. Key proposed changes to existing annexes include:

- **Annex I:** Streamlining the categories of pollution sources and adding emerging environmental concerns like microplastics, sargassum inundation, and ocean acidification.
- **Annex III (Domestic Wastewater):** Adjusting effluent limits for parameters such as Total Suspended Solids and fecal coliforms and introducing new limits for nutrients like Total Phosphorus and Total Nitrogen. The paper also recommended that discharge limits be reviewed every 10 years.
- **Annex IV (Agricultural Non-point Sources):** Incorporating the use of mathematical models for estimating pollutant loads and allowing for an extension to establish legal mechanisms.

113. Ms. Perez Hernández also noted that the technical information paper proposed the creation of two new technical annexes. The first- to address industrial wastewater, promoting a circular economy approach and control of discharges. The second would focus on the reuse of treated wastewater, establishing guidelines for safe application in areas like agriculture and landscaping.

114. Ms. Perez Hernández recommended that the LBS STAC may wish to consider establishing technical working groups to evaluate these proposals for consideration at the next STAC and Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings.

115. The President thanked Ms. Perez Hernández for her presentation. He invited comments from the floor.

116. **Comments on the Recommendations for amendments to the LBS Protocol**

117. **Jamaica** thanked the RAC-CIMAB for the extensive work and advised that they would need to review the implications as it relates to all their regulations. They endorsed the recommendation to form a Working Group. They also wanted to know how the proposed values were determined and over what timeframe.

118. **The USA** recognized the significant work that went into creating this report and the draft recommendations and inquired how some of these values were determined and proposed. Given the newness of the majority of the proposals they could not endorse the recommendations proposing to amend the Protocol and its Annexes at this time. They emphasized that this is an information paper and not an action paper proposal from a State party to the protocol and reiterated that it was not the place of the Unit, the Secretariat, or the RACs to put forward concrete proposals for treaty amendments, unless or until state parties have asked them to do so. They recognized that the ideas for the realization of the objectives of the Protocol are always welcome and Member States could advance treaty, amendment proposals if they wished.

119. They indicated that the focus should be directing the Convention's time and resources on matters that have been specifically requested. They supported the existing nutrient and wastewater subgroup of the OEWG and preferred to further discuss these issues instead through the Working Group. It was further noted that the Working Group should also consider the timeframe and preparedness for respective Contracting Parties to implement such modifications. Given the considerable amount of information and proposed recommendations at hand they believed the focus for the next biennium should be to organize

and vet the information, as well as ensure such recommendations, would truly advance the Protocol's objective without detracting from key pieces of the Protocol.

120. **FDPI** raised questions regarding the recommendation to increase in solids to 50l –and whether it would affect BOD under anticipation of increased water temperatures and whether the demand for oxygen would be different. Considering the technical paper's relevance to the Stockholm Convention they inquired whether there were any concerns from RACs or Contracting Parties regarding the contamination of waters for agricultural lands.
121. **RAC-CIMAB** suggested that the report be reviewed in further detail. Concerning the feedback from the USA, they supported the recommendations from the Secretariat regarding the improvement of the Protocol and deferred to the Coordinator to respond to the US comments.
122. **RAC CIMAB** re-shared the recommendations as below.
 - Contracting Parties, with the support of the Secretariat and the LBS RACs, establish one or more Technical Working Groups to review and evaluate proposed amendments to the LBS Protocol, according to their complexity, and to recommend the best way forward. In the case of proposed new annexes, specific and independent working groups should be established for each proposal.
 - Contracting Parties consider the proposed recommendations for amendments to the LBS Protocol, as described in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/INF.13, actively participate in the Technical Working Groups, and request that the conclusions of the Working Groups' assessment be submitted to the 8th LBS STAC and the 8th LBS COP for consideration.
 - In the new annex on wastewater reuse, the impact of emerging contaminants should be included (which, in turn, should be formally recognized as such in the LBS Protocol, as currently there is no mention of emerging contaminants within its framework).
123. **The Secretariat- Chris Corbin** thanked the delegates for their feedback and expressed appreciation for the work of the RACs in supporting this output. He invited Contracting Parties to provide feedback on this output, especially given their previous endorsement of this study. He advised that this body of work together with others on nutrient standards and other technical aspects of the Protocol, are the most important work being done on LBS since it was adopted in 1999. Given the significant achievements in science in global and regional frameworks in terms of national and regional capacity, it is a timely opportunity from a technical standpoint to review the Protocol. The Protocol is very important to projects that support it e.g. GEF Crew+.
124. **Mr. Corbin** also questioned how some of these technical recommendations could be considered in future COP decisions/discussions and suggested that further consultations be had with UNEP's legal unit as to how best some of these technical recommendations could be considered via COP decisions or other mechanisms as is the case with other Regional Seas.
125. **Trinidad and Tobago and RAC-IMA** stated that this activity was a very difficult one. They commended RAC-CIMAB on this work on standards and criteria. They endorsed the recommendation of RAC- CIMAB and having new working groups to explore concerns raised. They advised that creating these standards must be heavily science based. Regarding

the proposed guideline value, they suggested that there should be narrative and base level statements to help guide countries in their efforts to derive standards.

126. **The Dominican Republic** considered it feasible to include emerging contaminants (such as sargassum and plastics/microplastics) as sources of coastal pollution, and especially as topics of high regional priority. They understand for analytical purposes, the distinction between an **amendment** (a modification to the content of an approved document that carries the force of law) and an **addendum** (an additional document attached to a main document) must be considered, as these are two regulatory concepts with different legal effects.
127. **The Secretariat –Laverne Walker** asked Contracting Parties if they wished to have technical sessions further to presentations by the RACs and for discussions to continue through Working Groups and/ or would they agree for the Secretariat to have further discussions with legal teams as to the modalities and processes that would be needed to adopt these recommendations as per those asserted by the Coordinator. She advised that clarity is needed to help clear the way for the process.
128. **Barbados** endorsed the processes. Regarding the recommendation to establish new Working Groups they suggest that efforts be made to optimize existing ones before deciding on new ones. They advised they needed more time to review the technical matters and recommendations with their stakeholders.
129. **Guyana** had no objections to the recommendations advanced by RAC-CIMAB to provide an opportunity to influence the amendments in line with national environmental priorities, regulatory frameworks, and economic considerations and for in-depth technical assessments, ensuring that amendments are well-considered and scientifically sound.
130. **Trinidad and Tobago** supported the new Working Group for the technical recommendation for amendment of the LBS protocol.
131. **Barbados** shared an extract from deliberations of the Sixth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC). RECOMMENDATION VII POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO THE LBS PROTOCOL AND/OR ANNEXES 1. Contracting Parties note the challenges in obtaining data to enable preparation of information papers to guide possible amendments to the LBS Protocol and/or its Annexes relating to freshwater, nutrients standards, and other issues and recommend that LBS COP6 review progress made and request the OEWG and the LBS RACs to continue to work on these and a report to the LBS STAC7 and LBS COP7 for further review, recommendation and decision as appropriate.
132. **The Secretariat –Chris Corbin** advised that no new amendments had been made to the Cartagena Convention since inception apart from the adoption of the SPAW and the LBS Protocols. This would be useful guidance for the Secretariat in terms of how they approach edits/modifications to the Convention and Protocols with guidance from the UNEP legal team. He appreciated that more time was needed for the review of recommendations including the technical aspects via expert workshops and /otherwise. He stated that further to the technical discussions, the Secretariat will determine how best to operationalize any recommendations with the guidance of Contracting Parties. He emphasized that

recommendations will not refer to new annexes but rather Working Groups. He encouraged delegates to share specific related text for further review.

133. **The USA** stated that they could support the Secretariat's framing of revised recommendations. Regarding the proposal of new technical Working Groups given the limited resources and time, they recommended folding discussions in existing groups e.g. nutrients and wastewater and perhaps creating synergies working with SPAW Working Groups to avoid having new Working Groups.
134. **Dominican Republic** expressed appreciation for the technical discussions. Regarding the expansion of the list of pollutants, they stated that the creation of groups sounded good and acceptable, also consultation with legal expertise as suggested by Chris Corbin and the technical discussion. They also reminded that SPAW Working Group is addressing the sargassum challenge.
135. **Trinidad and Tobago** advised that presently in the OEWG there are sub working groups for the thematic areas for emerging issue of sargassum and microplastics.
136. **The USA** advised that they could support discussion of the issues and may be able to support aspects of the recommendations contingent on modifications but could prejudge that it was with a view to amend.
137. **RAC- CIMAB** shared their proposal for the 2 new working groups-: one for water reuse (new annex) and another for industrial wastewater (new annex); with the existing Open-Ended Working Group to cover the other proposed amendments/changes to the Protocol.
138. **The Secretariat –Laverne Walker**-Regarding feedback from the Dominican Republic and the USA to make more use of Working Groups and thematic subgroups, suggested that the Contracting Parties could nominate persons including experts to the thematic subgroups so there could be wider participation of countries and experts. She advised that the SPAW Sargassum Group had completed its mandate to develop a sargassum action plan and reminded that the SPAW STAC had recommended a Sargassum Working Group from the Contracting Parties which would be an overarching Working Group.
139. **The President** affirmed that further clarification would help chart the way forward. A Working Group would be addressing technical issues. The issue of amending annexes is outside the remit of Working Groups and RACs.
140. The President then thanked the delegates for their contributions.
141. **Assessment and recommendations on the management of freshwater resources within the framework of the Cartagena Convention UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.44/INF.9 Rev.1**
142. **The President invited Dr Maurice Narcis of the RAC-IMA to present the Report on Freshwater Resource Management.**
143. This report proposed a new strategy for freshwater resource management under the Cartagena Convention. The proposal advocates an approach centered on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and a "Source to Sea" perspective.
144. The development of this strategy included a review of past regional work, such as Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Framework to Support the Implementation of the Cartagena Convention; the IWRM Action Framework for CARICOM, and analysis of

international policies like the EU Water Framework Directive. The report identified key regional challenges to implementation, including climate change, land use and pollution, and adequate financing. The primary recommendation for the consideration of the 7 LBS STAC was that STAC request that the LBS COP consider proposing a new working group (WG) to further investigate IWRM within the Cartagena Convention's context.

145. The President thanked Dr. Narcis for the presentation and invited comments from the meeting.
146. **Comments on the Report on Freshwater Resource Management.**
147. **Barbados** noted that water is essential in all forms to the economy. In the context of the Convention, it supports marine flora and fauna and can transport pollutants from sources to sensitives ecosystems. They support further discussions through a working group.
148. **Jamaica** endorsed the recommendation for Contracting Parties to establish a new Working Group as there are issues related to IWRM that could potentially help to resolve issues for the Convention Area.
149. **Trinidad** supported the new Working Group based on the multiple issues to be addressed.
150. **Dominican Republic** expressed appreciation for the presentation stating that they identify with it. They endorsed the establishment of a Working Group on fresh water. They have a law and are giving high priority to this matter.
151. **The USA** noted that fresh water can impact other water resources and that they appreciated the recommendation for the establishment of a new Working Group on IWRM which they would continue to consider. The USA reiterated that they were unable to support any new agreements within the Convention and Protocol. They reminded the Secretariat to be mindful of resource limitations regarding this new Working Group and freshwater agreements.
152. **The Secretariat** shared context and clarification of the background on work which was done on source to sea projects in the past. They referred to programmes such as the Crew+ project which focused on water and wastewater management and advised that IWRM could lead to the protection of important species and habitats in estuarine and coastal areas. They anticipated that related issues would extend beyond the LBS Protocol. Hence the request for a Working Group at a Convention level so that it falls within the full range of the IWRM and allows all Contracting Parties to participate.
153. **FRANCE** expressed appreciation for the presentation and supported the establishment of the Working Group. They advised that in France the Water Framework Directive applies only up to the outer boundary of coastal water bodies for ecological status, and up to the limit of territorial waters for chemical status. Further, another directive—the Marine Strategy Framework Directive—applies to marine waters, including coastal water bodies, up to the boundary of the Exclusive Economic Zone.
154. **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** expressed appreciation for the presentation and requested clarification on the distinctions of the terms- marine, coastal, and nearshore waters...or to direct to a source where the definitions could be found.
155. **Guyana** welcomed and endorsed this initiative given its current geographical standing and the need for a more streamlined approach to capture freshwater impacts on the coastal

environment and given that most land-based sources of pollution originate inland within water sheds.

156. **Trinidad and Tobago** suggested that the terminology of coastal, nearshore and marine needed to be defined by countries as there may be different variations from country to country.
157. **RAC- IMA** responding to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines advised that the definitions for those terms may differ based on national legislation. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines may, within their own laws have definitions for those terms as per "territorial waters" and the respective EEZ. But generally, marine waters include deep sea and open ocean, coastal and nearshore may include beaches, river mouths, estuarine/bays, and sensitive ecosystems such as coral reefs, seagrass, mangroves.
158. **RAC-CIMAB** expressed appreciation and support of the Secretariat's intervention on the importance of including IWRM issues in the Cartagena Convention's area of interest approach.
159. **Antigua and Barbuda** endorsed the recommendation for a Working Group and for the continuation of the development of technical work to this end.
160. **Dr Narcis** thanked everyone for the positive feedback that the paper generated.
161. The President thanked delegates for their interventions.

AGENDA ITEM 7: DRAFT WORKPLAN FOR THE AMEP SUB-PROGRAMME FOR THE 2026-2027 BIENNIUM

162. The President invited the Secretariat to present the Draft Work Plan for AMEP for the 2026-2027 biennium.
163. **The Secretariat presented the Draft Work Plan for AMEP for the 2026-2027 biennium as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/3 and the LBS RACs presented their proposed work plans as contained in documents UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/4a and UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/4b.**
164. **Ms. Walker** advised that the proposed AMEP work plan aims to support parties in preventing and reducing marine pollution from both land-based and marine sources. It is structured around three thematic areas: Land and Marine Based Sources of Pollution, Monitoring and Integrated Ecosystem Assessment, and Integrated Ecosystem-Based Management Approaches.
165. Major activities will focus on implementing regional strategies for nutrient pollution reduction and marine litter management. This includes supporting countries to develop national action plans, updating legislation, and implementing pilot projects on wastewater management and plastics reduction. The proposed work plan also emphasizes enhancing pollution monitoring programs, developing the next iteration of the SOCAR, as well as an online learning system, and continuing to support existing and new working groups. The

Secretariat invited the 7 LBS STAC to consider endorsing the proposed AMEP work plan for 2026-27 including any recommendations made during the 7 LBS STAC.

166. Comments on the Draft Work Plan for AMEP/LBS Protocol for the 2026-2027 biennium.

167. The President invited the meeting to review and comment on the draft documents from the AMEP Sub- Programme.

168. **The USA** indicated that they wanted to use the opportunity to make provisions ahead of the COP and that they would submit comments on the proposed work plan prior to the 7 LBS COP. It was noted that whilst they supported many aspects of the workplan, they advised that it was very ambitious and recommended prioritizing and reducing the number of activities so as not to spread the resources of the Secretariat too thin. They underscored the availability of crucial data to inform the State of Convention Area report. As such they opined that they were not in a position to endorse the proposed 2026 – 2027 work plan in its current state.

169. **Jamaica** stated that that it was a well put together report with several activities to be implemented. They suggested that the activities be prioritized to avoid spreading the Secretariat too thin. They endorsed the draft work plan and will further review to determine if there are any written recommendations /interventions to follow.

170. **Antigua and Barbuda** inquired about unfunded activities and what was the approach/plan to have this addressed. Where would funding come from and how would this be managed.

171. **The Secretariat- Ms. Walker** advised that they were seeking opportunities for partnerships to fund the unfunded activities which were outlined in the presentation. Depending on the partner's priority, the Secretariat would approach them with an unfunded activity which was aligned with their own programmes.

172. **The President** opined that it may be useful to determine how the unfunded activities which were presented could be prioritized for funding.

173. **The Dominican Republic** expressed appreciation for the presentation and endorsed the work plan. They asked for more details regarding the recommendation proposing greater integration amongst the SPAW and AMEP subprogrammes, specifically in relation to addressing the issue of sargassum inundations.

174. The President thanked delegates for their interventions.

Presentations on the LBS RACs as contained in documents UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/4a and UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/4b.

175. **The President invited the LBS RACs to present their workplans.**

176. RAC –CIMAB and RAC-IMA delivered their presentations respectively.

RAC-CIMAB Presentation

177. **Marlen Perez of RAC-CIMAB** outlined the institution's strategic focus, including actions on emerging contaminants, capacity building, and nutrient management, emphasizing its foundation in strategic principles and prior agreements. While highlighting nutrient

monitoring as a current strength, the plan also aims to expand the laboratory's capabilities. A significant challenge identified was the need for mobilizing financial resources.

178. On a national level, the plan ensures the continuation of environmental quality projects funded by the Ministry of the Environment. A high-priority national monitoring program is also a central component of the work plan, demonstrating a commitment to ongoing environmental assessment and management.

179. **Comments on the LBS RAC-CIMAB Presentation**

180. **The President** congratulated RAC-CIMAB on the work done so far and the proposals for work going forward for the biennium and invited comments.

181. **The USA** advised that they could not provisionally endorse the recommendations due to pending comments and edits.

Trinidad and Tobago RAC- IMA Presentation

182. **Dr. Banjoo** presented the RAC-IMA's work plan for 2025-2027, outlining projects on marine pollution, oil spills, and sargassum detection in Trinidad and Tobago, with a focus on promoting circular economy solutions and increasing stakeholder awareness.

183. He also proposed a recommendation as follows:- The Cartagena Convention Secretariat and Contracting Parties support the continued expansion of the Early Detection System of the Oil Spills Pilot Project in Trinidad and Tobago as well as detection of Sargassum and marine pollutants by promoting partnership agreements to further integrate the protocols of the Cartagena Convention.

184. **Comments on the RAC-IMA Presentation**

185. The discussion focused on clarifying details about marine litter activities and budget allocations for Trinidad and Tobago. It also covered a recommendation for the expansion of an early detection system for oil spills and marine pollutants, which was endorsed by Jamaica and Barbados but required further consideration from the United States. The discussion concluded with an explanation of the background and context for the recommendation, highlighting its importance for capacity building and collaboration across different protocols.

186. **Jamaica** sought clarification on whether activities were national or regional, and inquired about funding activities for the entire workplan. They noted that it was very ambitious. They had no problem endorsing same but it would be useful to see an overall budget for the workplan especially if other parties wanted to fund/support. Regarding the recommendation for funding, they further inquired how the partnership agreement is to be done.

187. **Trinidad and Tobago** advised that there was a project breakdown in the document, and the partnership agreement (PA) could mean a MOU or MOE possibly at 2 levels (regional level at Cartagena Convention or between countries).

188. **Barbados** endorsed the recommendation noting the importance of tracking oil spills to ensure an adequate response to these types of events. They cited a recent spill in Oistins and successful efforts made to prevent it from reaching the ocean. This showed the significant effort required to respond and underscoring the rationale for the necessity of this mechanism.

189. **Jamaica, Guyana and Dominican Republic** also endorsed this recommendation.

190. **The USA** stated that they needed more time with this recommendation. They do not object and do not endorse at this time. They may however submit edits or comments (to refine the recommendation) as they review it in more detail.
191. **The Secretariat - Chris Corbin** provided more background on related LBS and Oil Spills Protocols advising that representatives of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) made presentations at other major fora including the meeting of the Oil Spills Protocol in Aruba. The IMA does a lot of capacity building including SPAW. It is a great opportunity to use technology to monitor pollutants as well. Having this type of collaboration across the various protocols would be a major milestone if this were endorsed now and later at the COP.
192. The President thanked delegates for their comments.

AGENDA ITEM 9: OTHER BUSINESS

193. The President invited delegates to raise any other issue not covered by the preceding Agenda items, but relevant to the scope of the Meeting however no other pertinent issues were raised.
194. **The President invited Member Governments or Observer Organizations to make brief presentations to the Meeting.**
195. Several presentations from partner organizations highlighted ongoing and potential collaborations:

Cefas

196. A presentation by **Professor Michelle Devlin from the UK's Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas)** introduced the Sustainable Blue Economies (SBE) Technical Assistance Platform. This platform is part of the UK's Blue Planet Fund and is designed to partner with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to build capacity for equitable and climate-resilient blue economies. A core principle is that good marine water quality is essential for sustainable development.
197. The presentation focused on the project, "Support for Enhancement of National Water Quality in the Wider Caribbean Region," specifically in **Jamaica** and **Guyana**. This initiative is a partnership between Cefas, the UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat, Jamaica's National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), and the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) of Guyana.
198. This work is country-led and tailored to address local challenges, leveraging Cefas's expertise in water quality monitoring, risk assessment, and policy implementation to support the sustainable use of ocean resources.
199. The President thanked Professor Delvin for her presentation and invited comments.
200. **The Secretariat–Chris Corbin** thanked Cefas for the opportunity to work on this project indicating that best practices can be replicated across other countries in the future. He revealed that the Secretariat was working on resource mobilization opportunities to strengthen water quality programmes, and to receive the requisite technical support. They would also be happy to provide additional clarification and links to the broader work of the Secretariat under the Oil Spills and SPAW Protocols and also for greater collaboration between the different RACs.

201. **Antigua and Barbuda** stated that he was looking forward to outcomes especially as the Blue Economy is now a part of Ministries in the region; and how we may broaden the participation of other parties.
202. **Jamaica** expressed excitement about this project especially as community members and students are a part of this initiative.
203. **Trinidad and Tobago (TTO)** stated that they and the RAC- IMA were very grateful for the support by Cefas in the region.
204. **Dominican Republic understands** that they are of interest for replication in other contracting countries, given the similarities in the impacts generated in our coastal areas.... allowing for triangular exchange and collaboration would be of utmost importance.
205. The President thanked delegates for their comments.

PROCARIBE+

206. **The President invited the presentation by OCM/PROCARIBE+**
207. **Mr. Alexander Girvan** of the **PROCARIBE+ project** in his presentation noted that the Ocean Coordination Mechanism (OCM) is the regional governance platform for the Wider Caribbean that provides a permanent, inclusive structure for aligning action, sharing knowledge, and optimizing the use of limited resources by enhancing coordination and collaboration across the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+ region).
208. The Presentation highlighted the importance of collaboration with the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and Contracting Parties in the development of key outputs of the OCM work programme, namely the periodic reporting of the "State of the Marine Environment and associated Socio-Economics" (SOMEE) for the Wider Caribbean. The SOMEE is expected to support the development of the LBS SOCAR report as the SOCAR report acts as a building block for the SOMEE. Ongoing engagement between the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and Parties is critical to the success of these related reporting activities.
209. The President thanked Mr. Girvan for the presentation and invited comments.
210. **Comments on the PROCARIBE+ Project**
211. This presentation received strong support from Trinidad and Tobago, RAC-IMA, and RAC-CIMAB for greater collaboration between the development process for the proposed integrated State of the Convention Area Report (SOCAR) on marine pollution and marine habitats and the State of Marine Environment and Associated Economies (SOMEE) reporting with the OCM.
212. **The Secretariat-Chris Corbin** expressed appreciation for the presentation. He advised that the Secretariat is a formal member of the OCM and serves as Vice- Chair of the Executive Group. He noted that the Secretariat was one of the co-executing agencies under the PROCARIBE+ project. He indicated there could be a very important role for the STAC and WGs in the next state of Convention area reports.
213. **The Secretariat** advised that discussions are underway with SOCAR. It was noted that previous STACs had recommended greater integration between marine pollution and habitats

and that the Secretariat is seeking to move forward with this in the next iteration of SOCAR which will be further discussed within the OEWG.

214. **The Dominican Republic** expressed appreciation for the presentation and the clarifying remarks of the Secretariat. They supported further integration of the SOCAR and the State of Habitats reports, as well as further collaboration between the Secretariat and the OCM in relation to the development of the two reports.
215. **Trinidad and Tobago** advised that they along with the RAC- IMA fully supported further dialogue in moving forward with a more integrated SOCAR, and for greater collaboration with the OCM for SOMEE.
216. **RAC-CIMAB** supported RAC-IMA's comment on the need for future dialogue on the integration of SOCAR and SOMEE reports.
217. **The USA** requested that within the AMEP Work Plan that they needed time to consider the recommendation proposed by PROCARIBE+ OCM as they were unable to remark on the proposed recommendations at this time.
218. The President thanked Mr. Girvan for his presentation and delegates for their inputs.

REMARCO

219. **The President invited Ms. Paola Obando of INVEMAR, Colombia to deliver a presentation on REMARCO.**
220. Ms. Obando outlined the implementation of a regional network for monitoring microplastics in the marine-coastal environments of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) on behalf of REMARCO (Red de Investigación de Estresores Marino-Costeros de América Latina y el Caribe), the presentation introduced two standardized protocols to harmonize data collection on microplastic contamination. The protocols are:
221. **REMARCO-MP-P-01**, for assessing microplastics in beach sands. This method uses a 100-meter transect parallel to the high-tide line to collect five replicate sand samples.
222. **REMARCO-MP-P-02**, for evaluating floating microplastics in coastal surface waters using a manta net. This involves three replicate tows with the net at each site.
223. Both protocols target plastic particles between 300 µm and 5 mm. Lab procedures involve sieving, density separation with a saturated NaCl solution, digestion of organic matter, and identification under a stereomicroscope. Results are reported as particles per square meter (MPs/m²) or per kilogram (MPs/kg) for sand, and particles per cubic meter (MPs/m³) for water, with data uploaded to the online Plataforma REMARCO.
224. The President thanked Ms. Obando for her presentation and invited comments.
225. **Comments on the REMARCO Presentation**
226. **The Dominican Republic** recommended strengthening the exchange of monitoring methodologies across the region. This call to unify criteria and standardize lines of work was supported by **Trinidad and Tobago and RAC -IMA.**
227. The President thanked delegates for their interventions.

The World Bank

228. **The President invited Mr. Gustavo Heredia, World Bank Consultant/ Water and Sanitation Specialist to deliver a presentation on The Importance of Septage Management in Protecting Ecosystems and Public Health**
229. **Mr. Heredia** highlighted the critical role of proper septage management in protecting ecosystems and public health. He explained that while septic tanks provide a low-cost and robust sanitation solution for many populations, their effectiveness depends on appropriate siting, design, and maintenance. Poorly managed systems can lead to nutrient and pathogen pollution of groundwater and coastal waters, especially in areas with high water tables. The presentation contrasted the relatively small volume of septage requiring treatment (1/1000 of sewage volumes) with the challenges of unregulated collection and lack of treatment facilities.
230. He recommended zoning and construction regulations, institutional arrangements for septage collection, and the development of dedicated septage treatment plants to ensure sustainable sanitation and prevent marine and groundwater contamination.
231. **Comments on the World Bank Presentation**
232. **The President thanked Mr. Heredia for his presentation and invited comments.**
233. **Trinidad and Tobago** inquired about the lack of zones for septic tanks and whether any assessment had been done in the region to inform zoning for septic tanks to avoid contamination of marine and coastal waters.
234. **Mr. Heredia** advised that he was unaware of any zoning. However, he announced the Bank's desire to launch a pilot project in Saint Lucia to develop a risk-mapping strategy for septage, a model that could be replicated in other Caribbean nations.
235. **The Secretariat**-Chris Corbin shared related work done on [sludge](#) under the GEF CReW Project.
236. **The Dominican Republic** thanked Mr. Heredia for his presentation and for its use as a reference for implementation in the Caribbean region. They cited current realities in coastal communities where spaces are improvised for the final disposal of liquid waste, which then becomes a source of pollution for the coastal area.
237. **The USA** also expressed appreciation for the presentation.
238. **The President** thanked all presenters for their hard work and delegates for their inputs.
239. The President then advised the next agenda item will review the proposed recommendations from the STAC. A draft would be prepared and circulated ahead of deliberations to make for review by the Parties.

AGENDA ITEM 10: ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING

240. The President invited The Rapporteur of the Meeting to present the summary of the proceedings to date and the draft Recommendations of the Meeting (**Document, UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.46/5**). The Meeting was invited to review and adopt the recommendations, with amendments and corrections to be introduced in the draft, as appropriate. The meeting then adopted the recommendations.

AGENDA ITEM 11: CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

241. The President and Secretariat thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.
242. The Meeting was closed on Friday 25th July 2025 at 13.30 by the President of the Meeting and the Secretariat.

The Annexes

[Annex I: Provisional Agenda .](#)

[Annex II: Provisional List of Documents](#)

[Annex III: Recommendations of the Meeting](#)

[Annex IV: List of Participants](#)

Annex IV: List of Participants

Rapporteur's notes