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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

REPORT OF THE 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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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

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REPORT OF THE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

1. The Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention is responsible for convening meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols in accordance with Article 16 of the Convention.
2. In accordance with the Workplan and Budget for 2021-2022, approved by the Sixteenth Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention, the Seventeenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region took place in hybrid mode on 05 October 2023 in Oranjestad, Aruba and virtually on the 28 November and 01 December 2023 respectively.

i. Meeting Objectives

3. This Meeting was held to review the achievements of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat during 2021- 2022 and to approve the Draft Workplan and Budget for the 2023-2024 (2025) biennium.
4. On behalf of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and other Member States of the Caribbean Environment Programme, the Secretariat convened the Meeting to:
 - **Evaluate** the projects and activities implemented during the period 2021-2022;
 - **Review** the progress made in the implementation of the Decisions of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, held virtually, 28 to 30 July 2021;
 - **Review** and **adopt** the Decisions of the Twelfth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region, held on 03 October 2023 in Oranjestad, Aruba;
 - **Review** and **adopt** the Decisions of the Sixth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) in the Wider Caribbean Region, held on 04 October 2023 in Oranjestad, Aruba;
 - **Review** and **approve** the Draft Workplan and Budget for the Cartagena Convention Secretariat for the 2023-2024 (2025) Biennium, including activities of the Regional Activity Centres; and
 - **Decide** on the composition of the Bureau and any other Committees, where required, for the 2023-2024 (2025) Biennium.

ii. Delegates/Participants

5. National focal points or their designated representatives of all States and Territories participating in the CEP and the Commission of the European Union were invited to attend the Meeting. Other States that demonstrated concern for the protection of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, UN and non-UN regional and international organisations, NGOs, donors, and private sector representatives participating in or interested in the CEP were invited to attend as Observers. Regional and international experts were also invited to make presentations to the Meeting in accordance with the provisional agenda.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING OF THE MEETING

6. Mr. Christopher Corbin, Coordinator of the Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention chaired the Opening Ceremony. Opening statements were made by representatives of the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands including the Minister of Environment of Aruba as the host of the meeting and UNEP.
7. Mr. Corbin welcomed the host of the series of intergovernmental meetings, Minister Ursell Arends from Aruba, other Ministers and distinguished delegates, and the Ambassador of France to Jamaica. He also acknowledged Permanent Secretaries, senior government officials, heads of departments, national and protocol focal points to the Cartagena Convention and its protocols on oil spills, specially protected areas and wildlife, and land - based sources (LBS) of marine pollution, as well as directors and senior staff of the Regional Activity Centers (RACs).
8. He noted that this was the third of a series of inter-governmental meetings which followed the Conference of Parties (COP) for the SPAW protocol, and the COP to the Marine Pollution Protocol held earlier in the week.
9. He acknowledged with thanks the significant contribution of the Government and people of Aruba, in hosting the meeting and to the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for their technical and financial support.

1.1 Welcome Remarks - Minister Ursell Arends, Aruba

10. Minister Arends welcomed everyone present and stated that moving from an intro-centric system to an egocentric system represented a significant shift in existential perspectives and values. This was essential for addressing environmental challenges and ensuring the well-being of the planet for future generations. It involved influencing individual attitudes, societal values, policies, and legislation to prioritize the health and the sustainability of ecosystems.
11. He revealed that Aruba was working to introduce the rights of nature within its Constitution and that the drafting of a law with input from local and international

partners had been completed. This was a watershed initiative given that Aruba's Constitution had never been amended before.

12. He said the proposed constitutional amendment signified the interdependence between the well-being of the people with that of the environment. It served as a constitutional basis for the protection of nature, including preventing ecosystem destruction and species extinction. It also allowed citizens to bring action into court to enforce these rights. It also recognized the need for citizens to be empowered with pertinent information regarding the state of nature- a responsibility of the government, knowledge institutions and NGOs.
13. He noted that whilst the efforts in Aruba may not bring direct change on a global scale, he hoped that they could inspire others.
14. Mr. Corbin congratulated Minister Arends for Aruba's leadership noting that given the significant role of nature to everyone's livelihood it was a critical and positive message that distinguished delegates could consider as negotiations continued. He remarked on how impressed he was with all the signage related to the Sustainable Development Goals, in the periphery of the hotel.
15. He then invited Mr. Johan Robinson, Head of UNEP's Ecosystem Integration Branch to deliver remarks on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP.

1.2 Remarks from Johan Robinson, Head of the UNEP Ecosystem Integration Branch

16. Mr. Robinson congratulated Minister Arends on the important work on the rights of nature and a clean environment in Aruba. He thanked everyone for attending the conference.
17. He said the past year had seen considerable progress at the global level on the adoption and planning processes on the new Global Biodiversity Framework. The adoption and recent signatures for the new UN Agreement on Biological Diversity beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), and with the ongoing negotiations for a new plastic agreement, he remarked that the Cartagena Convention and its protocols remained as relevant now as when they were adopted in 1983.
18. He said that the Caribbean Sea was a unique and fragile region that supported more than 100 million people. While it represented only 1% of the global ocean, it contributed approximately \$1/2 billion a year to the world economy. It boasts the second longest barrier reef system in the world, and ten marine biodiversity hotspots. The Regional Seas program including the Cartagena Convention must therefore play a crucial role for multilateral action to protect biodiversity and sustainably manage the use of vital coastal and marine resources.
19. He thanked the delegates for their flexibility in being able to accommodate the meeting notwithstanding that the meeting was being convened well into the current biennium. He pledged to ensure a return to a time that allowed for decision-making before a new biennium starts.

20. He noted that this was the first in-person meeting of the Secretariat since the COVID-19 pandemic and was cognizant that recovery had been slow and challenging in the region. He commended the region's resilience and indicated the commitment of UNEP to provide support for continued recovery.
21. He strongly encouraged all Parties to honor their respective financial pledges to the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) and expressed the wish that by the end of negotiations new ways would be found to place the Secretariat on a more sustainable financial footing.
22. He said the framework of the Convention and its protocols positioned the region to ensure that pollution stress on the coastal and marine ecosystems was reduced, and the social and economic services that they provided be enhanced through promoting conservation, restoration, and recovery of degraded habitats.
23. He noted that many approved projects were already moving towards more circular approaches in solid waste, plastic and wastewater and a potential blue economy in the wider Caribbean region. He stressed the need for integrated innovative solutions for policy and informed decision-making based on the best available science, and solutions that could assist in the overall development of the region. He urged parties to negotiate such strategies and solutions that could increase regional synergies and efficiencies while paving the way for prosperity and inclusive growth.
24. He remarked that what mattered was to achieve a vision of living, thriving in harmony with nature, and the continued protection of the ocean for future generations. He called on everyone to strengthen the decision making of the Convention and its Protocols to pave the way for a sustainable post-pandemic recovery, protect and manage the use of the marine environment of the wider Caribbean region. In the search for new development opportunities, he underscored the need for deliberations in a spirit of cooperation and common purpose and wished a successful outcome.
25. Mr. Corbin thanked Mr. Robinson for his remarks, ending the opening ceremony.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

2.1 Rules of Procedure

26. The Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) (UNEP, 2010) were applied for the Meeting's conduct.

2.2 Election of Officers

27. 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.

- **President** – Aruba/Kingdom of the Netherlands
- **Vice Presidents**
 - ✓ 1st Vice President – Barbados
 - ✓ 2nd Vice President – France
- **Rapporteur** – Jamaica

28. These officers form the Bureau of Contracting Parties for the period until the Eighteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention will be convened.

2.3 Organisation of Work

29. English, French, and Spanish were the working languages of the Meeting. Simultaneous interpretation in these languages was provided by the Secretariat for the plenary sessions. The working documents of the Meeting were made available in all working languages.

30. The Meeting adopted the hours of work and other procedural and organizational matters.

31. The Provisional List of Documents of the Meeting was presented in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.48/1.

AGENDA ITEM 3: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

32. The Meeting considered the Provisional Agenda and Annotated Agenda that were circulated by the Secretariat as documents [UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR IG.48/1](#) and [UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR IG.48/2](#) and introduced such changes as it deemed appropriate.

33. The President advised that three indications of interest had been received for short presentations during any other business. These were from the Regional Project Manager of the ProCaribe+ project, one from NOAA relating to the program of oil spill monitoring and another from The Nature Conservancy.

34. The meeting adopted the agenda as presented with the proposed amendments.

AGENDA ITEM 4: REPORT OF THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT OF THE BUREAU OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

35. The outgoing President of the Bureau of Contracting Parties from the Government of Barbados, Minister Adrian Forde presented his Report for the period 2021-2022 as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.48/INF.

36. Minister Forde acknowledged the Minister of the Environment of Aruba, foreign minister colleagues, government officials from member countries, and non-governmental partners. He thanked Chris Corbin, Coordinator of the Secretariat, for the work done in making the meeting a reality.

37. He advised that at the previous meeting of the COP which was convened virtually due to COVID-19 the following members of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties were elected.

38. Barbados-President, the Netherlands-First Vice President, the USA-Second Vice President, Colombia- third Vice President, and the British Virgin Islands- Rapporteur.
39. As President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, for the past biennium, he presided over the 16th COP and Conference of Parties for the two protocols.

2.4 Accomplishments of the Cartagena Secretariat

40. He welcomed and congratulated the new Coordinator, Mr. Christopher Corbin, who previously served as the Marine Pollution Program Manager and then as Officer in Charge, following the convening of the last COP. He advised that he continued to manage the ongoing transition at the Secretariat despite financial and human resource challenges.
41. He noted that the work being done continued to have positive beneficial impacts. The development and implementation of new projects and activities and engagement of new partners, increased visibility of success stories, and the ability of the Secretariat to respond to new emerging needs and priorities were to be lauded whilst battling the negative impacts of pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change.
42. He said the COVID-19 pandemic and global events such as the war in Ukraine placed additional social, environmental, and economic challenges on the region. Despite these significant challenges, the Secretariat remained committed to working with the leadership to ensure effective delivery of the work plan, which was approved in 2021.
43. He remarked on the success in mobilizing external funding for new project proposals which confirmed the trust and confidence by donors and the ability of the Secretariat to deliver on its mandate and support the long- term sustainability of the region's coastal and marine ecosystems.
44. He spoke of the sustainability of the Secretariat, period of change and transition; the relevance of the Cartagena Convention and its protocols to new global and regional commitments; ocean governance and maximizing new blue and green economic opportunities.
45. Given the financial and human resource challenges, it was important that contracting parties provide the Secretariat with strategic guidance and priorities on how best they could continue to enable compliance with obligations to the Convention and its protocols.
46. He referred to the last COP and vital decisions made to ensure the continued work of the Secretariat, including adjusting staffing levels and other cost-saving measures. He thanked the contracting parties who continued to honor their financial commitments to the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) and encouraged others who had large and outstanding contributions to honor them. He thanked the Kingdom of the Netherlands for their contribution which facilitated the hosting of the COP.
47. He commended the Secretariat's work and its success in developing and mobilizing extensive external funding for new projects and activities resulting in the largest portfolio

of projects. Although core Secretariat functions remained threatened, he acknowledged ongoing efforts to effectively manage the reduced contributions being received.

48. He stressed that sustainability would depend on financial contributions and the Secretariat's ability to mobilize resources from external projects from donors, but also the team's availability and capacity to deliver.
49. He thanked the RACs and partner agencies that formed the RAN for their support as well as the host governments of Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, France, and Curacao.
50. He acknowledged the ongoing support of the governments of the United States and Trinidad and Tobago through seconded experts to the Oil Spills RAC. He also recognized the support previously provided by the Government of Jamaica to that Centre. He said contracting parties needed to continue to send a strong message to the upcoming meetings of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the meeting of Ministers of the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean.
51. He highlighted the targets of the new Global Biodiversity Framework, and decisions related to the new Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement, and the ongoing discussions on a new plastics treaty, as areas where the Cartagena Convention could serve as a coordinating platform. The task of developing, prioritizing, and implementing a portfolio of projects and activities to meet the needs of a region as diverse as the wider Caribbean was a challenging one.
52. He recognized the value of partnerships with the Global Environment Facility, (GEF) which supported several ongoing and new regional projects; the European Union, and the Government of Germany on programs ranging from ocean governance to marine protected areas, pollution prevention, and circular economy approaches. He also highlighted the Secretariat's work in maintaining an effective communication and awareness building program, with an improved website and increased use of social media, all without a dedicated program officer for the CETA subprogram.
53. He expressed the hope that a more sustainable solution for these activities could be found in the future.
54. He noted with pleasure the updated 2030 Medium-Term Strategy for the work of the Cartagena Convention and ways to continue to support the development of an ocean based green and blue economies within the framework of the Convention and the protocols. He said if these opportunities were to be maximized, the coastal and marine resources needed to be sustainably managed and used.
55. He said that the various projects that facilitated greater partnerships with the private sector and new livelihood opportunities reflected the work of the Secretariat and supported the broader development agenda across the region.
56. He highlighted projects currently underway in Barbados which supported the work of the Convention. They included a Blue Bond in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank and Nature Conservancy that would leverage US \$50 million in funding over the next 15 years to help with the conservation and management of the

country's marine and terrestrial biodiversity reserves and support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. "Swamp," as it was called, had a major commitment of the preparation of a marine spatial plan for Barbados and its economic zone within the next five years, inclusive of an aspirational target to place approximately 30% of the country's biodiversity area under protection. The transaction enabled the establishment of a National Conservation Trust Fund, (the Barbados Environmental Sustainable Fund,) that would enable the engagement of the public and private sector agencies, along with civil society organizations, to pursue desired national environmental policy goals.

57. He revealed that the Government of Barbados had offered to host the next meeting of the annual Regional Seas Convention Action Plans, following discussions with the Secretariat. This was the first time this meeting was being held in the wider Caribbean region.
58. He concluded by thanking the government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Government of Aruba. for convening the inter-governmental meetings. He also pledged his support to engage other colleague ministers for the next COP.
59. Minister Ursell Arends thanked Minister Forde for his report and his work and dedication over the past two years.
60. He then invited the Secretariat to deliver the report of the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme on the work of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat for the previous biennium.

AGENDA ITEM 5: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PLAN AND BUDGET OF THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION SECRETARIAT (2021-2022)

61. The Secretariat, represented by Mr. Corbin began by inviting the delegate from the Government of Colombia as depositary for the Cartagena Convention to provide the Meeting with a report on any ratifications and/or accessions that took place during the previous biennium 2021-2022.
62. The delegate from Colombia provided a summary of the status of ratifications and indicated that no new ratifications took place during the biennium.
63. The President then invited the Secretariat to present the Report of the Executive Director of UNEP on the Implementation of the Work Plan for 2021-2022, as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.48/INF.4.
64. Mr. Corbin's presentation emphasized the response to the decisions of the Nineteenth Intergovernmental Meeting and Sixteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties. It also highlighted the Secretariat's work carried out through the Marine Pollution and Marine Biodiversity Subprograms to the Conferences of Parties to the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) and Land-Based Sources (LBS) of Marine Pollution Protocols respectively, work on Knowledge Management and Communications, and details on

resource mobilization, budget expenditure and human resources. The work of the Regional Activity Centres (RACs) of the Secretariat was also presented.

65. He reported that the Secretariat bade farewell to several colleagues from the Secretariat and Regional Activity Centres notably former SPAW Program Manager, a Junior Program Officer who provided support for projects funded from the Government of Germany; and two of the consultants at RAC REMPEITC.
66. He recognized the continued contribution of the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago and the USA through the US Coast Guard to the work of RAC REMPEITC. He also highlighted new staff appointments at RAC IMA and a new Program Manager for the SPAW protocol.
67. In response to a previous COP Decision for the Secretariat to work more closely with the Bureau, a COP decision tracking tool was established to facilitate regular reporting to the Bureau. In addition, several new knowledge products were produced in French and Spanish. Other highlights were the mobilizing of financial resources for new projects, identifying new partnership opportunities, and strengthening synergies with other Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.
68. He highlighted critical areas related to the level of financial contributions, the requirement for the extension of the Trust Fund, and the importance of these face-to-face meetings.
69. He said the Secretariat was grateful for the support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Government of Aruba that enabled the Secretariat to convene this meeting face-to-face.
70. Regarding the governance of the Secretariat and how to improve its efficiency and its effectiveness, he advised that UNEP Headquarters will provide further information based on the financial analysis of the Secretariat's operations and issues of which contracting parties should be made aware.
71. In relation to the Caribbean Environment Program, (CEP) medium term strategy 2023 to 2030, he revealed that this was a process started two biennia ago. There was a pause due to the critical functional review that was done. Based on the limited number of comments received, the decision was to forgo the establishment of a working group.
72. The Secretariat incorporated the comments and presented the updated strategy for further consideration at this meeting.
73. A concern of the previous Conference of Parties was the need to give more visibility to the excellent work being done by the Regional Center for Oil Spills, located in Curacao.
74. The Secretariat remained involved in the development of Procaribe+ project, which was approved, and that implementation was underway.
75. The Secretariat completed the development of a Terms of Reference for the Bureau, which guided its work during the biennium. It was successful in developing new projects under the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Terms of Reference for a consultant to

develop a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy was completed and resources were sourced for implementing this activity during the next biennium.

76. In keeping with the request of contracting parties for a simpler way of reporting online, the Secretariat had discussions with other global multilateral partners/agreements such as the Basel Convention, other Regional Seas programs that had developed customized reporting templates and will continue to work on this during the biennium.
77. He thanked the governments who provided reports and support of the Convention and advised that those reports would be uploaded to the Secretariat's website.
78. He highlighted the excellent work done by the RAC in response to specific recommendations provided by the Oil Spill Steering Committee.
79. He said a new website was created which allowed for greater visibility of the Center. An area of collaboration was between the RAC for the Land Based Sources (LBS) of Marine Pollution Protocol, Institute of Marine Affairs, (IMA) through the Costa Project and the Regional Center for Oil Spills in Curacao.
80. Other significant achievements included the Support to Ballast Water Management Workshop held in Colombia in 2022. Whilst the ballast water management was not directly within the purview of the Cartagena Convention, there were provisions that enabled the Secretariat to continue to work very closely with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on issues and themes that would impact on the coastal and marine environment of which ballast water discharge was a major concern and a priority area of focus for the RACs. The Secretariat also supported the IMO with oil pollution preparedness, resource and cooperation, promoting/hosting capacity building workshops, and developing national oil spill contingency plans in Dominican Republic, Dominica, and Cuba.
81. A regional workshop on ship-generated waste was held in Montego Bay in February of 2023. The RAC continued outreach to many contracting parties, including at the annual meeting of Directors and Heads of Maritime Administrations of the Caribbean.
82. The Secretariat continued to work with other networks such as BIOPAMA on protected areas management effectiveness. It published guidelines and manuals on the conservation of endangered and threatened species; and the state of marine habitat. It also developed a regional action plan relating to marine biodiversity.
83. Several other publications relating to coral reef and mangrove restoration, and new coral reef diseases were finalized and disseminated.
84. The Secretariat sought opportunities for new partnerships with the global multilateral environmental agreement Secretariats.
85. He emphasized the financial support that was received for various projects including the IWEco project; the Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management; providing support to small islands, Central American and South American contracting parties, and

non-contracting parties; circular economy projects, plastics management, and marine litter management.

86. He highlighted funding received for national activities in support of pollution prevention and advised that briefs were produced to enhance knowledge management. Other partnerships enabled harmonized manuals on marine litter, a new marine litter strategy and a regional action plan for waste management in the Caribbean. Work was also done to develop case studies on the use of nature-based solutions for wastewater management with The Nature Conservancy. The Secretariat also worked with support from the IWeco project on a regional integrated water resource management strategy and plan which will be finalized during the next biennium.
87. He highlighted the need for funding to support and address regional capacity building challenges and emphasized the importance of timely contributions by Member States and Contracting Parties to the Caribbean Trust Fund.
88. In closing he said he looked forward to improving the engagement of focal points and experts in working groups.
89. The President invited the meeting to provide comments and seek clarifications on the report of the Executive Director based on the presentation, including any lessons learned as well as to make recommendations, propose decisions for further discussion and/or adoption.

5.1 Comments from the floor

90. **Colombia** thanked the Secretariat for all the work done and reiterated the call to honor the use of the three languages of the Convention and timely publication of meeting documents. They verified that most of the decisions of the last COP 16 were honored and encouraged the Secretariat and parties to continue with implementing the program strategy.
91. They also highlighted fund mobilization, the ratification of the agreement of the Convention and its protocols. They suggested working with focal points to determine the next steps.
92. Regarding the online platform, they highlighted that any changes in the template for the national reports should be responsive to the provisions of the Convention and its protocols. They also indicated they wished to endorse the recommendations and conclusions in the presentations made.
93. **The United States** thanked the Honorable Minister from Aruba and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for hosting the meeting and the Secretariat for their extraordinary efforts to prepare for it. They commended the Honorable Minister Forde for his report and leadership of the Bureau over the past biennium.
94. They expressed appreciation for all the work that went into preparing the wealth of documents for the meeting.
95. They expressed concern that some of the meeting documents were posted with a brief review timeline.

96. They acknowledged comments made about the need to strengthen national coordination on marine and coastal issues but given the extremely tight review time, and plethora of meeting documents, their ability to coordinate at the national level, and deliver meaningful meeting outcomes were hampered. They issued a call for timely posting of all meeting documents.
97. They said it was essential to focus resources on clear priorities, one of which should be direct support for the implementation of the Convention and its protocols for this meeting, rather than objecting to documents that were posted late. They thanked Colombia for their report on the status of ratifications of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.
98. They congratulated the government of Nicaragua on their ratification of the SPAW protocol noting that both the SPAW and LBS COPs highlighted a strong interest among contracting parties to encourage ratification of the protocols. They invited those contracting parties to the Convention who were not yet parties to the SPAW or the LBS protocol to provide an update at the next Meeting of Contracting Parties regarding the status of their ratification efforts, as well as any impediments identified and/or assistance they may need. They thanked the Secretariat for the report on all the work that they did over the past biennium and that, as always, they were impressed.
99. They congratulated Mr. Corbin on his appointment as Coordinator and looked forward to working with everyone to advance the work of the Convention over the next biennium.

5.2 Secretariat's Response

100. Mr. Corbin thanked delegates for their remarks and apologized for the challenges including the late posting of documents and in some cases, posting in only one language, which constrained the ability of delegates to deliberate fully. He advised that efforts will be made to correct this in the future. He thanked them for their patience, flexibility, and willingness to have constructive discussions, notwithstanding these constraints.
101. The Secretariat then invited a representative from the RAC/ Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Centre RAC REMPEITC to make a presentation on the work done within the framework of the Oil Spills Protocol and in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO). They were also invited to present the Recommendations from the Oil Spills Steering Committee as provided in Document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.48/INF.9
102. The representative from RAC/REMPEITC presented an overview of the major activities and achievements of the Centre over the previous biennium.
103. The meeting was asked to endorse the Oil Spill Steering Committee's recommendations and make any other recommendations and/or decisions as deemed appropriate. The recommendations were endorsed, and no further comments were received.

AGENDA ITEM 6: STRATEGIC ISSUES OF RELEVANCE FOR THE DRAFT WORK PLAN AND BUDGET 2023-2024

104. The President invited Mr. Johan Robinson, Head of the UNEP Ecosystems Integration Branch, to make a presentation on the relevant work taking place at the global level.
105. As Head of the Ecosystem Integration Branch and all the Regional Seas, Mr. Robinson advised that his Unit was responsible for coordinating 18 regional seas and administering six of them.
106. He outlined that UNEP has been the world's leading advocate for over the last 50 years on environmental issues. It provides technical expertise in science, data, knowledge and experience through international agreements and local policy. It also provides solutions by new thinking and science-based policy and action.
107. UNEP's medium-term strategy guides work for the period 2022 to 2025. The goal is for a healthy, productive, and resilient environment which includes the ocean. The principal areas of focus were to address the planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.
108. The Ecosystems Integration Branch, which includes the Regional Seas Programme, leverages multilateral environmental agreements to support global commitments including the sustainable development goals. It also promotes integrated approaches to ensure that there is institutional and policy coherence. At the level of global ocean governance and resolutions in the UN system, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas forms the overall framework for the work of all Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.
109. He reiterated the importance of focusing on Sustainable Development Goal 14 on life below water. He further highlighted several UN General Assembly resolutions and United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions that covered several areas of importance including the work of Regional Seas, plastics and microplastics pollution, land-based sources and activities, nutrients, wastewater, nature-based solutions and mangroves, coral reefs, and peatlands.
110. He provided additional background on the work of the Regional Seas Program, which UNEP oversees. There are 18 of them in 146 participating countries with 14 of them established through UNEP and four were independently established.
111. The Regional Seas program is a coordinating program and an important mechanism for supporting countries in implementing their own national obligations and those of other related multilateral environmental agreements. UNEP assists, guides, coordinates, and facilitates the implementation of the different instruments and, through its funding, political discussions, leadership and convening power have been instrumental in establishing these 18 Regional Seas Conventions and action plans. In some of these regions, the States assumed management operation of the action plans and conventions. Seven of them are still being managed by UNEP HQ. Strategic directions developed and approved covered the 2022-25 period and mainstreamed conservation, monitoring and combating the triple planetary crisis to achieve long-term ocean health. These three strategic goals fall within UNEP's strategic directions.

112. UNEP also supports assessment, information, and knowledge management at all levels to strengthen science policy, and dialogue. Communication and advocacy facilitate increased reach, visibility and mainstreaming of the Regional Seas program.
113. Regarding the Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which was adopted in December 2020, he said there are four goals and 23 action oriented global targets. He cited as examples targets 1 to 4, which addressed the threats to biodiversity and terrestrial marine areas and efforts to find linkages between the GEF, the Global Biodiversity Framework and Regional Seas.
114. He said there was an opportunity to upscale successful pilots, review dependencies and impacts on ecosystems, existing policy, and management frameworks. He reported that the Regional Seas program was developing a strategy for implementing Global Biodiversity framework for regional seas.
115. He advised that the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Treaty was adopted in June 2023 and over 70 countries had signed this historic treaty. It addresses conservation, sustainable use of, biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, access and benefits sharing to marine genetic resources.
116. He spoke of area-based management tools, which included marine protected areas, and how countries will act towards environmental impact assessments, building capacity, especially in the transfer of marine technology.
117. He said a strategy was being developed for ratification of the Inter-Governmental Negotiation committee on plastic pollution and that a resolution was passed to end plastic pollution and to work towards the international legally binding instrument.
118. He said the UN sustainable economy was especially important to the Regional Seas, and that a strategic guide on the blue economy for Regional Seas program had been developed and would be launched in early 2024. This was an important steppingstone for Regional Seas.
119. He announced that plans for the 4th International Conference on Small Island Development will get underway in 2024. This will be held in Antigua and Barbuda. It will assess the progress gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Barbados Program of Action, the Resource Strategy, and the Samoa Pathway and the SIDs Partnership Framework. It will seek to renew political commitment to address the gaps and the vulnerability of assets, and it will focus on pragmatic actions for implement action.
120. He said that through the regional seas, there was an opportunity to leverage the existing mechanism for coordinated action and support and to have dialogue and information exchange between countries, scientific communities, and civil societies to promote knowledge sharing and cooperation.
121. Regarding upcoming events, he said there would be the global meeting of the Regional Seas program in November 2023 marking the 50th anniversary of the UNEP Regional Seas Program.

122. The President then invited the Secretariat to present the revised document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.41/INF.22 Rev.2, which was an updated version of the “Draft Strategy for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Network 2023-2030” including incorporation of comments received during the 16th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Cartagena Convention.
123. The Secretariat provided a concise overview of the current content for the new Strategy and requested if the Meeting would consider endorsement during this COP.
124. The Meeting felt that adequate time was not provided for a comprehensive review in the three languages and that the Secretariat should consult further with Parties with the view to having a final Strategy endorsed inter-sessionally or at the very latest at the next COP.
125. The President then invited the Secretariat to present the documents Review of Operations, Functioning, and Financing of Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and Regional Activity Networks (RANs) of the Cartagena Convention Workplan 2022/2023 as contained in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.44/INF.18.
126. The Secretariat gave a brief history of the RAC RAN Guidelines' development and the recommendations from the consultancy reviewing them. The Secretariat further recommended that the Meeting endorse the update of these guidelines for inclusion in the proposed 2023/2024 Work Plan which would establish a more harmonized approach for the work of RACs and RANs established through the Convention and its Protocols.
127. The President invited the Secretariat to introduce the representative from the UNEP Science Division to present a report on ongoing efforts to enhance data and information management including how GEMS Oceans can help build capacity for strengthened environmental monitoring, analysis, and decision-making in the Wider Caribbean Region, building on work already done by the Secretariat.
128. A presentation was made of the workshop's outputs that took place simultaneously during the COPs in Aruba highlighting the continued vital role of data and information management and marine spatial planning. The presentation was welcomed by delegates and the Secretariat encouraged to continue close collaboration with the UNEP Science Division and UNESCO IOC Caribe.
129. Regarding the need to review and update the current Guidelines for the Establishment and Operations of RACs and RANs, the meeting encouraged that this should be a priority for the next work plan and that funds be mobilized to complete this update by the next COP.

AGENDA ITEM 7: DRAFT WORKPLAN AND BUDGET FOR THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION FOR THE 2023-2024 BIENNIUM

130. The President invited the Secretariat to present the document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.45/3, entitled “Draft Workplan and Budget for the Cartagena Convention for the 2023-2024 Biennium.”
131. The Secretariat provided an overview of the new 2023-2024 Draft Workplan and Budget highlighting the several ongoing projects and activities and areas where resource mobilization would be needed.
132. Mr. Corbin highlighted that the plan featured an integrated implementation approach supported by partners, RANs, and Regional Nodes.
133. He began by outlining the work being planned to support the implementation of the Oil Spills Protocol and coordinated through RAC REMPEITC Caribe. The proposed activities responded directly to recommendations 15-16 and 30 from the 10th OSC report.
134. He advised that the Strategic Plan 2015–2025 was under review and would be updated for the next 10-year period (2026 – 2036).
135. He highlighted the three strategic priorities as follows:
 - Activity planning and execution based on UNEP and IMO priorities, balancing efforts between the supported IMO conventions.
 - Renewed focus on MARPOL Annex XI & greenhouse gas emissions reduction to advance maritime decarbonization goals.
 - Current funding for capacity building efforts which were being provided by IMO.
136. He provided an overview of recent and upcoming activities that had already taken place during the current biennium.
 - September 26-28, 2023-National Workshop on the Implementation of the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships (AFS Convention) – Havana, Cuba
 - October 17-19, 2023- National Workshop on Oil Spill National Contingency Plan (NCP) – Bridgetown, Barbados
 - October 31 – November 02, 2023-National Workshop on Ballast Water Management Convention – Nassau, Bahamas
 - 2024 National workshops proposed for Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Belize, Guyana, and Bahamas- (dates to be determined)
 - May 2024-11th Meeting of the Ordinary Steering Committee (OSC) for RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe.
137. Mr. Corbin proceeded to highlight the main projects and activities to be implemented under the SPAW and AMEP subprograms including program coordination, monitoring and integrated ecosystem assessment, addressing land and marine-based source of marine pollution and ecosystem-based management.

138. He presented a timeline of several projects to be undertaken over the period including the UNEP regional seas (tbc), GEF Procaribe+, GEF Gulf of Mexico, GEF IWeco, EU ACP MEA among others.
139. He advised that the efforts would continue to support Parties to implement the Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy subject to availability of financial resources and proposed implementation in 2 phases through to 2029.
140. He indicated that resources were available to support parties notably through the ACP MEA 3 project for developing National Action Plans for Pollution Reduction including for Marine Litter, Nutrients & Wastewater; Ratification of the Cartagena Convention & LBS Protocol; National Wastewater Effluent Regulations; Supporting Maritime & Oil Spills Policy/Regulations e.g. MARPOL (Ongoing in Barbados & Dom Rep); and National/Regional Capacity building for ratifying and/or implementing Cartagena Convention, LBS Protocol & related MEAs.
141. He gave an overview of the Draft AMEP and SPAW budgets and unfunded activities.

AMEP Budget

Activity	2023 Budgeted				2024 Budgeted			
	CTF	Other Sources*	Total Cost	Required Balance*	CTF	Other Sources*	Total Cost	Required Balance*
A. Regional Programme Coordination								
1. Staffing	290,000		290,000	0	255,000	0	255,000	0
2. LBS STAC/COP 6 (unfunded)	0	211,143	211,143	0	0	0	0	0
3. Regional Project/Programme Management	0	511,913.79	511,913.79	0	0	551,864.68	551,864.68	0
B. Land and Marine-Based Sources of Pollution	0	5,795,078.87	5,795,078.87	50,000	0	3,024,630.47	3,024,630.47	50,000
C. Monitoring and Integrated Assessment	0	2,178,680.92	2,178,680.92	105,000	0	674,825	74,825	245,000
D. Ecosystem-Based Management	0	90,000	90,000	67,500	0	8,563	8,563	157,500
TOTAL AMEP*	290,000	8,786,817	9,076,817	222,500	255,000	4,259,883	4,514,883	452,500

*Excludes indirect (programme support cost) charges to non-GEF projects

*Required balance reflects shortfall between budgeted total cost and expenditure from the CTF & other project funding

AMEP SUB-PROGRAMME'S UNFUNDED ACTIVITIES

Thematic Area	Proposed Activity	Estimated Budget
Land and Marine Based Sources of Pollution	Support the development and/or implementation of national nutrient reduction strategies and action plans in at least 3 Contracting Parties	USD 100,000
Monitoring and Integrated Ecosystem Assessment	Develop a new regional State of Convention Area Report on Marine Pollution in collaboration with the SPAW Sub-Programme.	USD 200,000
	Enhance the regional database and information management system at the Secretariat	USD 50,000
	Organize Training Workshops for monitoring the impact of run-off & poor land-use practices.	USD 50,000
	Organize Training Workshop for the identification and tracking of priority pollutants including plastics and nutrients	USD 50,000
Ecosystem-Based Management	Organize a Training Workshop to promote the sharing of experience on the implementation of EBM and Nature Based Solutions	USD 75,000
	Design and Implement National Interventions using EBM and NBS (based on country demand) in at least 3 Contracting Parties	USD 150,000
TOTAL		USD 675,000

SPAW BUDGET

Activity	2023 Budgeted				2024 Budgeted			
	CTF	Other Sources*	Total cost	Required Balance*	CTF	Other Sources*	Total Cost	Required Balance*
2.1 Programme Coordination (staffing costs)	365,664	345,846	711,510	0	419,800	360,002	779,802	0
2.2. Programme Coordination (includes COP and STAC Meetings) unfunded	0	211,143	211,113	0	0	0	0	1,000
2.2 Strengthening of protected areas in the Wider Caribbean Region	0	288,900	288,900	20,000	0	205,900	205,900	33,000
2.3 Implementation of Guidelines for the Management of Protected Areas and Species	0	8,710	8,710	10,000	0	45,600	45,600	31,000
2.4 Conservation of threatened and endangered species	0	516,521	516,521	20,000	0	83,821	83,821	26,000
2.5 Conservation, Sustainable Use and Restoration of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems	0	286,714	286,714	20,000	0	308,494	308,494	45,000
TOTAL SPAW	365,664	1,657,834	2,023,498	70,000	419,800	1,003,817	1,423,617	136,000

*Excludes indirect (programme support cost) charges to non-GEF projects

*Includes funding from France through SPAW-RAC from the CAMAC Project

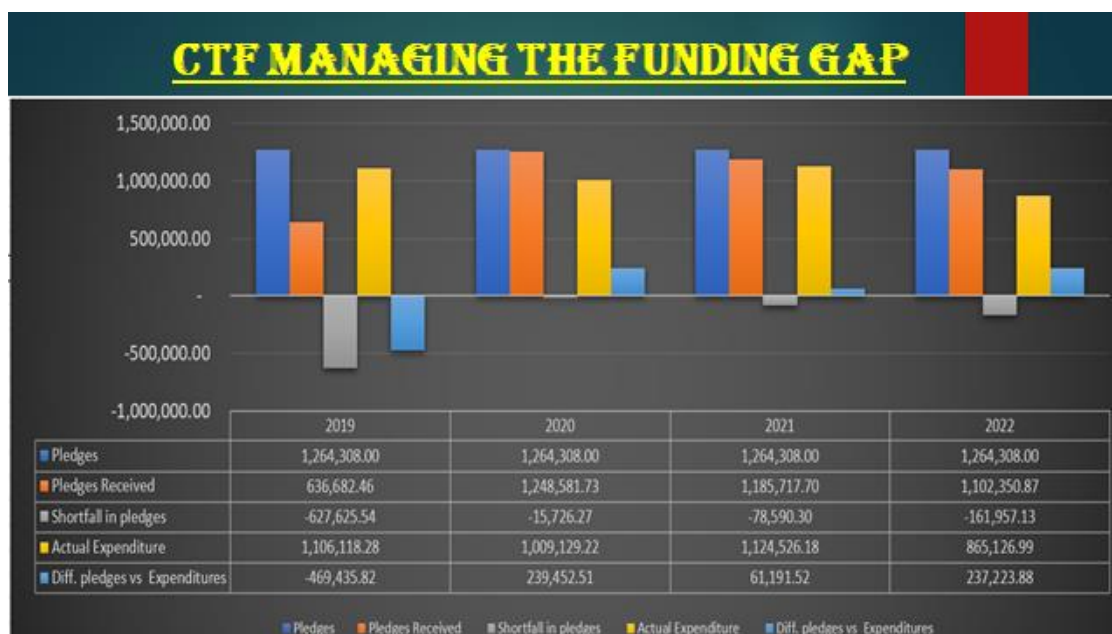
*Required balance reflects shortfalls between budgeted total cost and expenditure amounts from the CTF +

*Other project funding to be calculated at the end of the biennium and reflected in the Status of Activities Report for 2023-2024

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142. He underscored other SPAW unfunded activities with a proposed budget of USD 206,000 which covered program coordination, strengthening of protected areas, implementation of guidelines for the management of protected areas and species, conservation of threatened and endangered species, conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems.

143. He revealed that funding sources included the CTF-USD2,528,616; extra budgetary resources garnered through projects/ grants - USD 31,081,934 and EUR 3,156,811; and program support cost -USD 108, 636 (2023 based on 2022 income).
144. He outlined the status of the CTF, and contributions received as of 30th Sept 2023, the gap and countries that were outstanding with payments.



145. He reminded delegates of the financial rules of the Cartagena Convention regarding outstanding contributions for two years and the opportunity for impacted parties to clear these within a maximum of 4 years and to pay future contributions by due dates. He also advised that these countries would be ineligible for financial support to participate in meetings and projects where applicable of the Convention and its protocols unless they provided a formal commitment and made an initial payment.
146. He closed with an overview of the CTF 2023-25 budget.

CARTAGENA CONVENTION TRUST FUND: <u>2023-2025 BUDGET</u>								
Commitment Type	2023 Budget		2024 Budget			2025 Budget		
	Funded	2023 Total	Funded	Unfunded	2024 Total	Funded	Unfunded	2025 Total
Employee salaries allowances and benefits:	911,500	911,500	933,688		933,688	933,688		933,688
Contractual Services:	15,000	15,000	15,000		15,000	15,000		15,000
Furniture & Equipment:	7,000	7,000	7,000		7,000	7,000		7,000
Supplies, Material, Commodities:	3,500	3,500	3,500		3,500	3,500		3,500
Travel of staff on official business:	30,000	30,000	30,000		30,000	30,000		30,000
Operational Other Costs	110,000	110,000	135,000	395,000	530,000	135,000	600,000	735,000
- Premises lease, electricity, WiFi, cleaning services etc.	75,000	75,000	100,000		100,000	100,000		100,000
- Umoja maintenance cost	35,000	35,000	35,000		35,000	35,000		35,000
- UN House Renovation of common areas				395,000	395,000			-
Meeting costs:					-		600,000	600,000
Total direct cost:	1,077,000	1,077,000	1,124,188	395,000	1,519,188	1,124,188	600,000	1,724,188
UN-PSC (13%) - Indirect Cost:	140,010	140,010	146,144	51,350	197,494	146,144	78,000	224,144
Total budget	1,217,010	1,217,010	1,270,332	446,350	1,716,682	1,270,332	678,000	1,948,332

147. During the plenary discussions, Parties thanked the Secretariat for the extensive presentation noting that it was overly ambitious and would need careful management during the biennium to ensure that the resources of the Secretariat are not spread too thin.

AGENDA ITEM 8: ROLE OF BUREAU AND ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUPS/ COMMITTEES FOR THE 2023-2024 BIENNIUM

148. The President invited the Secretariat to highlight any issues they would like to bring to the attention of the meeting relating to additional support for the upcoming biennium that could be provided either from the Bureau and/or through the expansion of existing working groups and/or establishment of new working groups.
149. The Meeting welcomed the suggestion by the Secretariat for doing an analysis of the Governance Structure for the Working Groups and for proposing an expanded Bureau to include the Bureaus of both the Cartagena Convention and its respective Protocols and for an increased role of the President and the Bureau to guide the work of the Secretariat during the next biennium.

AGENDA ITEM 9: OTHER BUSINESS

150. The Meeting was invited to raise any other matters not covered by the preceding Agenda items, but relevant to the scope of the Meeting. Invited observers were also invited to make short presentations of relevance to the Meeting.
151. These included a presentation on the ProCaribe+ project by the Regional Project Coordinator; the COSTA Project to Track Oil Spills UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.47/INF by the NOAA The Barcelona Convention and its Governance Structure by the MAP

Coordinator of The UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan and the Regional Blueprint by TNC.

9.1 The ProCaribe+ project

152. Patrick Debels from UNOPS delivered a presentation on the ProCaribe+ project; 10 year CLME + SAP (2015-2025); The 5 year UNDP/GEF ProCaribe+ Project (2023-2028); the Successor to the CLME (2009-2014) and CLME+ (2015-2012) projects and supporting the implementation of the 10 year regional Strategic Action Program on the Marine Environment (SAP) and the regional Ocean Coordination Mechanism.
153. He cited GEF's support for large marine ecosystems and that there were 3 key transboundary problems- habitat degradation, unsustainable fisheries, and pollution.
154. He stated that a new phase of CLME+ Initiative was underway. This was the 5-year UNDP/GEF PROCARIBE+ Project (May 2023 - May 2028) supported by a GEF Grant valued at USD 15.4m.
155. He stated that the project aimed to protect, restore, and harness the natural coastal and marine capital of the CLME+ region to catalyze investments in a climate-resilient, sustainable post-COVID Blue Economy, through strengthened regional coordination and collaboration, and wide-ranging partnerships.
156. He described the 4 components of the project which were to enhance regional coordination and collaboration; enable national environments; catalyze actions by all sectors of society for oceans-based sustainable development; and facilitate knowledge management, marine data infrastructure, and global learning exchanges.
157. He revealed that a MOU was to be signed on October 6 in Aruba creating the coordination mechanism to support integrated ocean governance in the Caribbean and the North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems. The Ocean Coordination mechanism aims to create and enhance synergies and enable greater efficiency and effectiveness in the MOU Signatories' work.
158. Contracting Parties are expected to consider the Secretariat's and PROCARIBE+ Coordination Unit's collaboration during the PROCARIBE+ inception phase, towards the integration of relevant elements of PROCARIBE+ into the work program(s) of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, with clear indication of targets, responsibilities, and budget, and for inter-sessional approval by the Parties.
159. The parties are also expected to provide guidance to the Secretariat regarding its potential/desirable role in this context.

9.2 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Presentation on the COSTA Project to Track Oil Spills

160. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (U.S. Department of Commerce) NOAA delivered a presentation to provide an update on the (Collaboration

for Oil Satellite Tracking in the Americas) COSTA Program and its support for the WCR's Oil Spill early detection through Satellite Remote Sensing.

161. With the availability of high resolution, publicly available satellite imagery, routine oil spill monitoring can provide the first warning of a spill or intentional vessel oil discharge, help inform and direct spill response resources during major spills, and help countries find and target chronic leak sources.
162. COSTA (Collaboration for Oil Satellite Tracking in the Americas) is an international effort to enable nations in the Americas to stand up satellite oil spill monitoring and early detection capabilities in the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean and adjacent oceans.
163. They referred to decision VI from the 16th meeting of the COP to the Cartagena Convention which urged the Secretariat to continue its promotional work of the Centre, strengthen regional collaboration and capacity building on oil spill monitoring, and detection using satellite remote sensing technology as well as to support the operations of RAC/REMPEITC.
164. They advised that COSTA had increased collaborations and partnerships and shared examples of how they had managed oil spills in the region in recent times.
165. •**US** Since 2009, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s Satellite Analysis Branch (SAB) has established a 24/7 satellite marine pollution program to monitor marine oil spills in the US EEZ .US NOAA occasionally support satellite monitoring of international large spills; however, the formal request process could result in significant delay.
166. •**Trinidad and Tobago**. TT is the first Caribbean country trained by NOAA and has fully established their operational oil monitoring program since July 2021.
167. They expanded to cover the Eastern and Southern Caribbean in March 2023 in a pilot test, and plan to fully expand early 2024.
168. •**Mexico** and **Peru** have finished their training and have transitioned to near real-time monitoring. Mexico currently monitors the Southern GOM.
169. •**Colombia** is the latest country to join COSTA. They are in phase 3 operations with SAB analysts' imagery support and will be fully operational by the end of 2023.
170. Several other Central American countries had also expressed an interest in joining COSTA.
171. They are also supporting the IMA's effort to expand monitoring for the Western and Southern Caribbean regions and that an additional 22 countries and territories could be covered in this expansion. They urged delegates to contact RAC REMPEITC in their respective countries to receive monitoring reports.
172. They provided an overview of large spill events in July 2023 which received support among them the Trinidad and Tobago spill offshore Cedros and La Brea, the Mexico oil spill.

173. They revealed that in 2022 they also provided support following the sinking of the oil tanker M/V CETUS northwest of Aruba leaving a considerable oil spill and two persons lost. In response to requests, the IMA generated three MPSRs based on Sentinel 1 and Sentinel 2 imagery. The reports were used by Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard in Aruba as well as Jamaica for oil spill response. NOAA received a formal support request for international support and ordered commercial Radars to support the event, while working together with IMA. By then, no further oil anomaly was detected. They advised cutting the response time of satellite support by 5 days, this event demonstrated the advantage of having local satellite monitoring capability in the Caribbean region.
174. They advised that next steps included the coordination of training for a Central American Integration System (SICA); identification of partners for long-term monitoring in the WCRs currently not currently covered; improving engagement with COSTA partners and report user agencies; strengthening partnerships to support regional efforts on other marine and atmospheric pollution monitoring such as marine debris and methane emission.

9.3 Presentation on Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

175. The presentation on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework highlighted key entry points for cooperation and collaboration amongst MEAs. The presenters cited common interests and opportunities in implementation, monitoring, and reporting and optimizing cost effectiveness.
176. They cited various MEA decisions and resolutions calling for increased synergies and collaboration on NBSAPs across biodiversity-related conventions. They shared several mandates of other biodiversity-related conventions on potential alignment.
177. They advised that the Bern process aimed to strengthen cooperation among Parties and Secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant Conventions, in implementing the K-M GBF
178. The CBD COP invited UNEP to facilitate strengthened cooperation/collaboration amongst MEAs in implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework, building on experience of the Bern consultations. They reported that they were working with the Swiss Government and SCBD, and that UNEP was planning for a Bern III Conference in January 2024.
179. They presented an overview of the data reporting tool for MEAs- DaRT-managing knowledge the smart way <https://dart.informea.org/>.
180. They stated that DaRT aimed to create national working spaces in which reporters to MEAs organize, share, and maintain their documentation to facilitate discovery and retrieval of relevant biodiversity information for reporting purposes. They advised that it was a tool for knowledge management at the national level and stressed that it was not an additional reporting obligation neither did it affect the reporting processes established by Agreements.

181. They revealed that DaRT had made a considerable impact globally, with over 150 countries having attended a DaRT event, workshop, or webinar, and 104 countries boasting a DaRT working space. They highlighted Cameroon, Switzerland, and China as DaRT flagship countries.
182. They offered several recommendations which could be considered in the context of other decisions being taken by the COP. These included requests for the Secretariat to
- explore the alignment of the Convention's objectives and activities with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and advise Parties on the opportunities
 - work with UNEP to further identify tools and guidance that will support Parties in developing coherent and synergistic approaches to implementing Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
183. They urged Parties to establish close collaboration between Convention Focal Points and the Focal Points of other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements for governments to develop coherent and synergistic approaches in implementation; work with the National Focal Points of the Convention on Biological Diversity to ensure the inclusion of strategies and actions relevant to the Cartagena Convention in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, as well as in associated knowledge management and reporting. They also invited parties to explore the benefits of using (DaRT) as a tool to support national reporting to Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

9.4 Regional Blueprint by The Nature Conservancy

184. The Nature Conservancy delivered a presentation on the Regional Blueprint. It focused on **“Securing a Nature-Positive Future for the Caribbean by 2030.”** They revealed that since 2008 there had been an increase of protected areas (land and sea) by 166%. They highlighted some of the most important places to protect at the regional scale and new habitat maps that were under consideration.
185. They provided an overview of Blueprint Financing and Policy Tiers. Regarding conservation financing they indicated that the intention was to harness TNC’s experience and expertise with securing capital using blended public-private finance, sovereign debt for nature initiatives, and large-scale project financing for permanence.
186. Regarding promoting an enabling environment, they suggested that science should inform policy; assessments at national and regional levels should be encouraged; enabling policies and addressing policy gaps be implemented; as well as the development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.
187. They recommended that the Cartagena Convention Secretariat partner with The Nature Conservancy in further developing and adopting a Regional Conservation Blueprint for Securing a Nature-Positive Future for the Caribbean by 2030. They also

urged Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and the SPAW Protocol to support the implementation of the Regional Conservation Blueprint.

9.5 The Barcelona Convention and its Governance Structure

188. Tatjana Hema, MAP Coordinator of The UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan–Barcelona Convention Secretariat presented an overview of the Barcelona Convention and its governance structure.
189. The Barcelona resolution on MAP was adopted in 1975 and the Convention adopted in 1976. Both were amended in 1995. There are 22 Contracting Parties including the EU.
190. The Convention is complemented by 7 Protocols: Dumping, Prevention and Emergency, LBS, Hazardous Wastes, SPA/BD, Offshore, and ICZM.
191. Its vision is to “progress towards a healthy, clean, sustainable and climate resilient Mediterranean Sea and Coast with productive and biologically diverse marine and coastal ecosystems, where the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its SDGs are achieved through the effective implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development for the benefit of people and nature”
192. She highlighted several of the Convention’s protocols, among them Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Protocol (1982/amended in 1995), Offshore Protocol (1994), and Hazardous Wastes Protocol (1996).
193. The Coordinating Unit is in Athen Greece and its mission is to promote and facilitate the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and Strategies, and of the Decisions and Recommendations of the Contracting Parties. It ensures the functioning of the MAP system and facilitates the work of the Contracting Parties to meet their commitments under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.
194. UNEP/MAP Governing and subsidiary bodies include The Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP), The Bureau of the Contracting Parties, MAP Focal Points, The Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), and The Compliance Committee.
195. She shared the UNEP/MAP Medium term strategy for 2022-27 and advised that it was aligned with the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2021- 2025; global processes: i.e., 2030 Agenda and SDGs, UN Decades (Ecosystem Restoration and Ocean Science); CBD post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and others. It would be further strengthened with the results of key assessments, evaluations, partnerships, and coordination with other national, international, global actors and key regional initiatives.
196. The meeting welcomed these presentations and asked that a reference be made to them in the final Meeting Decisions.

9.6 Advisory - High Level Inter-Governmental Meeting

197. The President also advised that the high-level intergovernmental meeting would be held on Friday, 6 November 2023 following the Cartagena COP.

AGENDA ITEM 10: ADOPTION OF THE DECISIONS OF THE MEETING

198. The Rapporteur presented the draft Decisions of the Meeting (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.48/5) for the delegates' review which were adopted with amendments and corrections as appropriate. They included the Decisions of the Twentieth Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) and Seventeenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, the Twelfth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) and the Sixth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) in the Wider Caribbean Region Actions.

AGENDA ITEM 11: CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

199. The Meeting closed with final statements by the representative of the Government of the Aruba as Host of the Meeting, and the Coordinator of Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention.
200. The President announced that the Decisions of the 17th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention would be translated and shared in Spanish and French.
201. He thanked all delegates for their interventions, the Secretariat, the interpreters, and the Aruban team who worked to make this COP a tremendous success.
202. Chris Corbin extended appreciation to the President, Rapporteur, the Bureau Members, Contracting Parties and all the delegates, for arriving at the successful adoption of the decisions and for providing the Secretariat with a clear mandate for its work over the next biennium and extending into 2025.
203. He reported that the Secretariat hosted the annual regional annual meeting of regional coordinators, which was supported and convened in Barbados the week prior.
204. He advised that pertinent documents from that meeting would be shared with parties, among them those relating to regional seas and the blue economy, the INC process, and the plastics negotiation. He added that another document was being developed regarding the global biodiversity framework.
205. He said that the Secretariat would be participating in the conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Antigua and Barbuda, in April 2024 and plans were to use this event as an opportunity with other Regional Seas to highlight the Secretariat's work in support of (SIDS).

206. He said that the Secretariat had received strong encouragement from the French Government to work with them in the lead up to the UN Oceans Conference in 2025.
207. He thanked Contracting Parties who made payments to the CTF and pledged to support those outstanding to work with them to help in the process.
208. He announced the new Marine Pollution Program Manager would be based at the Secretariat in Kingston by February 2024.
209. He closed by acknowledging the financial support provided by the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Government of Aruba, and the Government of France, for convening of these COPs and for follow up activities.
210. The President thanked all delegates for their attendance and patience, for their interventions and support in shaping the decisions and closed the meeting with good wishes to all delegates for the Holiday Season.

Annex I: Provisional Agenda

Annex II: Provisional List of Documents

Annex III: Recommendations of the Meeting

Annex IV: List of Participants