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18 June 2020

Dear Mr. Jares

Reference is made to the letter of Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Secretary General for Legal Affairs and the United Nations Legal Counsel, dated 15 April 2020, inviting the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to provide input to the report of the Secretary General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, which will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly for consideration at its seventy-fifth session.

Appended herewith is the contribution of the CBD Secretariat regarding information on relevant

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Annex. Information on other relevant developments within the Convention on Biological Diversity relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea

Executive Summary

This note summarizes recent work under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) relevant to ocean affairs and the law of the sea.

The CBD Secretariat has undertaken regional workshops to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) 21 of which have thus far been considered by COP and transmitted to the UN General Assembly and relevant international processes. The Secretariat is also reviewing work under the CBD on EBSAs and also identifying potential modalities for the modification of the description of EBSAs and for the description of new EBSAs.

The Secretariat also facilitates multi-stakeholder collaboration in the context of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 through the Community of Ocean Action on Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management.

The Secretariat has been compiling information on relevant experiences on various issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, including implementation of the Priority Actions to Achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for Coral Reefs and Closely Associated Ecosystems, implementation of the Voluntary Specific Workplan on Biodiversity in Cold-water Areas within the Jurisdictional Scope of the Convention, and implementation of the Voluntary Practical Guidance on Preventing and Mitigating the Impacts of Marine Debris on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats.

The Convention's work also continues to address stressors on marine biodiversity, including through a report on the impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats and tools and approaches to minimize and mitigate these impacts, which will be published in the CBD Technical Series.

The Secretariat has been collaborating with the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Fisheries Experts Group of the IUCN Commission of Ecosystem Management and the European Bureau for Conservation and Development. This collaboration has recently focused on (i) publication of a CBD Technical Series report on assessing progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 10, and (ii) convening an expert meeting on identifying other effective area-based conservation measures in the fisheries sector.

Negotiations on the development of the Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework are underway under the CBD. In support of these discussions, the Secretariat convened a thematic consultation specifically on marine and coastal biodiversity, with a view to identifying key ocean elements to inform the ongoing deliberations on the framework.

The Secretariat has also continued capacity building efforts under the Sustainable Ocean Initiative including by planning the third meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies.

INTRODUCTION

1. This note consists of brief descriptions of the work carried out under the CBD in the following areas related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea: (i) ecologically or biologically significant marine areas; (ii) facilitating dialogue and multi-stakeholder engagement in the context of SDG 14; (iii) compilation of relevant experiences in various issues related to marine and coastal biodiversity; (iii) addressing threats to marine and coastal biodiversity; (iv) addressing biodiversity considerations in fisheries, facilitating the identification and reporting of other effective area-based conservation measures in the marine fishery sector; (vi) supporting the development of the Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; (vii) capacity building

8. The Secretariat is currently conducting, in collaboration with the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative and with financial support from the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund), a study to review the impacts of the work under the CBD on EBSAs. The study will include an analysis of selected cases that have used EBSA information in various ways around the world as well as how EBSA

Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for Coral Reefs and Closely Associated Ecosystems, or activities that are in line with them, for sharing through the Portal.

13. On the basis of input received in response to the notification, the Secretariat prepared a synthesis of submissions on experiences for the implementation of Priority Actions to Achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for Coral Reefs and Closely Associated Ecosystems. This document will be made available as an information document for SBSTTA at its twenty-fourth meeting (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/2).

Implementation of the Voluntary Specific Workplan on Biodiversity in Cold-water Areas within the Jurisdictional Scope of the Convention⁴

14. In notification [2018](#)

[the Impacts of Underwater Noise on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats](#)” and background materials prepared for the Expert Workshop on Underwater Noise and its Impacts on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity (London, 25-27 February 2014), as well as on the compilation of submissions on experiences in the use of measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity (CBD/SBSTTA/22/INF/13). The report will be issued

25. In decision 14/34, the Conference of the Parties agreed on a process for the preparation of the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the implementation of this process. Pursuant to this request, as part of an overarching programme of thematic consultations and workshops, adopted by the Open-ended Working Group on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework at its first meeting, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity convened the Thematic Workshop on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity for the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, in Montreal, Canada, from 13 to 15 November 2019, as part of the 2020 Ocean Pathways Week (see above, paragraph 1).

26. The workshop aimed to produce concrete proposals to be considered in the development of the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The workshop outcomes were made available to the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to support the production of the [Zero Draft of the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) and were also made available to the second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group to support deliberations on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (24- 29 February 2020, Rome, Italy). The report of the workshop is being provided as an information document for SBSTTA and is available here <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/d9b2/362b/5879759c148c8d35231d6753/post2019-10-02-en.pdf>

27. The Open-ended Working Group on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework considered the Zero Draft of the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework at its second meeting and invited SBSTTA to carry out a scientific and technical review of the updated targets, indicators and baselines of the draft framework, as well as its revised appendices, and to provide advice to the Working Group at its third meeting (to be held in Cali, Colombia, at a date to be determined). It further requested the preparation of documents to be made available to SBSTTA, which will make recommendations to the Working Group at its third meeting and to the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth meeting, as appropriate. It is also expected that SBSTTA will request the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group and the Executive Secretary to consider the results of its deliberations when preparing further documentation for the Working Group, including the preparation a first draft of Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

28. The third meeting of the Working Group will be held, at the earliest, nine weeks after the close of the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI, date to be confirmed). The first draft of the global biodiversity framework will be made available six weeks prior to the third meeting of the Working Group. A second draft of the framework will be made available following the third meeting of the Working Group.

29. The Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) is a global platform for building partnerships and enhancing the capacity of developing country Parties to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity in a holistic manner. The Executive Secretary has continued the capacity building work under SOI that began with its creation on the margins of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, convening a series of capacity building workshops at the regional, subregional and national levels, the most recent of which was the Training of Trainers Workshop, held in Seocheon, Republic of Korea, from 14 to 18 October 2019). The report of this workshop is available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/73ad/fe04/48897d2bdcf9328db19a092f/se2019-01-02-en.pdf>.

30. The Secretariat had planned to convene the third meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies in March 2020, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and the National Biodiversity Institute of Korea. The meeting was postponed and will be rescheduled (date to be determined). This meeting will build on the

results of the first two meetings, held in Seoul in 2016 (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/mar/soiom2016-01/official/soiom2016-01-outcome-en.pdf>) and 2018 (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/a3e1/53e3/08fc2a8f36e21b2366d03aa07s2018-01-02-en.pdf>) and will aim to: (a) enhance mutual understanding of the roles, mandates and work of regional seas organizations and regional fishery bodies, (b) share lessons and experiences on areas of mutual interest to regional seas organizations and regional fishery bodies both within and across regions, (c) report on progress in regional scale cross-sectoral collaboration, (d) identify tangible opportunities to advance regional collaboration (including sources of support for such collaboration), and (e) outline the roles of regional organizations in achieving global goals and targets for the ocean, including the 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

PROVIDING SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INPUT TO RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES

31. The CBD Secretariat contributes scientific and technical input to various intergovernmental processes on issues related to marine and coastal biodiversity, on the basis of decisions of the CBD COP and relevant scientific and technical work coordinated by the Secretariat. Such processes include, for example, the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, the United Nations Open Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, the FAO Committee on Fisheries, the International Seabed Authority and discussions and deliberations by various regional fishery bodies, regional seas conventions and action plans.