

and regional workshops, and funds to edit and translate the outputs of the second cycle into all official languages of the United Nations.

6. In the second cycle, a more clearly defined mechanism for appointment to the Pool of Experts was developed, taking into account the lessons learned from the first cycle. This was later revised to further streamline and simplify the nomination process. This, along with the appointment of National Focal Points for the Regular Process, were essential to the establishment and growth of the Pool of Experts for the second cycle.

7. More activities were also carried out during the second cycle, including the production of technical abstracts from the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (First world ocean assessment, WOA I), the holding of a two-day multi-stakeholder dialogue and the conduct of outreach and awareness-raising activities, including in the margins of several ocean-related intergovernmental meetings. The number of regional workshops held increased from eight to 12. Two separate meetings of the writing teams were also organized in New York.

8. The situation of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its impacts requested many activities during the last year of the second cycle being conducted in an adapted manner, including through the extensive use of web-based working methods. Many efforts were made by States, the Group of Experts, members of writing teams and the secretariat to minimize the impacts of the situation on the implementation of the second cycle. As a result, the implementation of the second cycle, in particular the preparation of the second world ocean assessment (WOA II), remained on schedule. It is noted, however, that the situation may have impacted the ability of some States to provide input during the State review process and of stakeholders to provide input on lessons learned. In view of these developments, the need for more extensive use of web-based working methods, in particular during the early stages of the third cycle, was highlighted.

C. Overall operation

Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole

9. During the second cycle, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole has been meeting once a year, with additional meetings as necessary. Until the end of the second cycle, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole will have held 8 meetings during the second cycle. An average of 50 Member States participated in these meetings, varying from 31 (the Ninth meeting) to 63 (the Seventh meeting) Member States participating. The length of these meetings has varied from two (most meetings) to five days (the Seventh meeting). As the secretariat of the Regular Process, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) of the Office of Legal Affairs provided support to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, within its

23. Some members of the Group of Experts had at times indicated that they found it difficult to attend these meetings due to funding, visa, travel authorization or other logistics challenges. Overall, securing funding to travel was the major challenge for members from developed countries, and administrative issues were the major challenge for members from developing countries.

24. Given the importance of these in-person meetings, it would be beneficial to consider measures that would further facilitate the attendance by members of the Group of Experts to these meetings, encouraging States to facilitate the travel by members of the Group of Experts, and establishing mechanisms to

the limited capacity of the secretariat and that no resources were made available in this regard. Meanwhile, intergovernmental organizations were not invited to designate focal points in spite of their important role in facilitating communication with many experts, disseminating information and awareness-raising.

29. Going forward, it would be important to further strengthen the network of focal points, including by encouraging further designation of NFPs by States that have not done so, and inviting the secretariats of relevant United Nations specialized agencies, programmes, funds and

members to coordinate the production of chapters or sub-chapters under their purview, which also caused delays in the overall preparation of the assessment.

33. This uneven division of labour was largely due to the lack of experts among the members of the Group of Experts in certain areas, including taxonomy and social sciences. Several members of the Group of Experts expressed that they were uncomfortable taking on a lead role in relation to a chapter or sub-chapter for which they did not have the necessary expertise. While the system of having a lead and co-lead members was developed for the second cycle, the degree of collaboration among the lead and co-lead members largely depended on the inclinations of the lead member.

34. Going forward, it would be important to ensure that the Group of Experts encompasses a balanced and adequate set of expertise. It might be advisable in this regard to develop a list of required expertise among the members of the Group of Experts to facilitate the nomination of experts. The Group of Experts might wish to consider measures that would enable responsibilities to be more evenly divided among the members of the Group of Experts, including through strengthening collaboration among the lead and co-lead members.

Constitution of the Pool of Experts

35. The Pool of Experts provided members of the writing teams and peer-reviewers for the preparation and peer review of WOA II. As of JuW*6(ts)27()JTJETQ.00000912 0 612 792 reW*nBT/F1 12 .

assistance of the secretariat to identify potential experts, the information of such experts were shared with the States of nationalities for their consideration of nomination.

39. For future cycles, it would be important to put in place more robust processes to engage potential members of the Pool of Experts. It seems advisable that the expertise needed in the Pool of Experts be identified at an early stage and be formulated in a manner that allows potential members, including members of the Pool of Experts from the previous cycles, to easily understand whether and how their expertise would match the needs. The time period for appointing experts to the Pool of Experts could be open-ended so as to fill gaps in needed expertise identified during the cycle or caused by withdraw of experts from the Pool of Experts. The mechanism for the establishment the Pool of Experts could also include procedures for self-recommendations, recommendations of experts by members of the Group of Experts, and recommendations by non-governmental organizations that participate in the Ad Hoc Working of the Whole. Measures should also be taken to encourage actions on improving gender balance in the Pool of Experts.

Establishment of writing to

way communication between members of the Pool of Experts and the Group of Experts, including by enhancing information sharing on the process of and progress in the establishment of writing teams.

beneficial to establish a tentative timeline for the workshops, taking into account, inter alia, the availability of the members of the Group of Experts and dates of major scientific meetings. It might also be useful to further expand on the parameters for an offer to host in the calls sent to States, with information on certain essential legal provisions, such as on privileges and immunities, access to medical services and visas. This would allow potential host Governments to consider a clear set of requirements, which might also facilitate the early conclusion of host country agreements. Additionally, information materials could potentially be produced and disseminated to further elaborate on these needs and requirements.

55. Having co-hosts for regional workshops was greatly beneficial in the second cycle, and actively engaging intergovernmental organizations as possible co-hosts should be continued during future cycles.. The option of having a virtual workshop could be particularly important given possible persisting travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Database on recent and ongoing assessments

56. According to the programme of work of the second cycle, an online database on recent and ongoing assessments was supposed to be developed during the second cycle. However, due to the limited capacity and resources of the secretariat, as well as the lack of responses to the calls seeking relevant information, this database has not been made available online.

57. The database on recent and ongoing assessments is expected to be a useful tool for ensuring that the assessments prepared under the Regular Process are building on existing regional assessments. Information provided in such a database may also be useful for ensuring that the Regular Process and other relevant assessments at the global level support one another and avoid unnecessary duplication. For future cycles, it seems advisable that further measures be taken to support the development, maintenance and improvement of such a database, including by strengthening the capacity of the secretariat with necessary resources, and encouraging the provision of needed information by relevant processes.

Preparation of WOA II

Guidance for contributors

58. Developed at an early stage during the second cycle, the Guidance for contributors outlined tasks of different contributors for the preparation of WOA II. However, no updates were made to this document after its development, resulting in an enlarging gap between its guidelines

sharing in this regard, including through the preparation and dissemination of information materials.

Communication with, within and between writing teams

60. During the second cycle, communication with and within the writing teams primarily took place electronically, and the specific method of communication was determined by each individual lead member or convenor. Due to budgetary implications, the members of writing teams were not provided with access to a common online collaboration platform for their work on WOA II. The writing teams for each chapter worked independently unless lead members decided that collaboration would be beneficial. In 2019, in view of a number of incidents where lack of effective communication caused significant delays in the preparation of some chapters or sub-chapter, and upon requests by the Group of Experts, the secretariat took on a more active role in supporting communication with, within and between writing teams. This was, however, restrained by the limited capacity and availability of resources for the secretariat in this regard.

61. Going forward, additional resources should be made available to improve communication with, within and between writing teams, including by providing all members of writing teams with access to a common online collaboration platform for their work on the outputs of the Regular Process. Noting that the work of writing teams is within the primary purview of the lead members and convenors, it might also be helpful to clarify the functions of the secretariat in supporting the communication with, within and between writing teams, and ensure that the secretariat has necessary human and technical capacity to perform these functions.

Review process for WOA II

62. The review process for WOA II had two stages: peer-review, completed by experts drawn from the Pool of Experts that did not take part in drafting the chapters they were reviewing; and review by States, where Member States are invited to review and provide comments on the first and second drafts of WOA II. Dedicated webpages were created for the process of review by

be further strengthened and maintained on a regular basis. Possible coordination mechanism among the secretariats of such processes might be adopted, including through the UN-Oceans. Further events may be organized with a view to promoting inter-processes dialogue on the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects.

F. Outreach and awareness-raising

69. During the second cycle, the secretariat has engaged in outreach and awareness-raising activities, including through the regional workshops, briefings or side events on the Regular Process for States and other stakeholders in the margins of intergovernmental meetings, and the production of brochures on the Regular Process. A website dedicated to the Regular Process was developed during the second cycle, which facilitated the sharing of information with and engagement of stakeholders in the Regular Process.

70. While the secretariat has undertaken outreach and awareness raising activities whenever and wherever possible, it is recognized that constraints related to inter alia the financial situation

the secretariat of the Regular Process with one Professional staff member (P-2) and, on occasion, an additional General Service staff member. Notwithstanding these additions, it was noted that the workload of the secretariat was much greater than previously anticipated. This required the secretariat to work regularly beyond its capacity and beyond regular working hours in order to achieve the goals of the second cycle of the Regular Process.

78. Going forward, it would be important to ensure that the secretariat is equipped with reasonable human resources that are sufficient and necessary for supporting the effective implementation of future cycles.