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REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

(Item 5(c) of the provisional agenda)

Strengthening Subregional Cooperation on Marine Protected Areas

Note by the Secretariat

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I. OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

1. NEASPEC had a series of consultations on its role in strengthening subregional cooperation on marine environment including SOM-16 in September 2011, an Expert Consultation Meeting (ECM) in June 2012, SOM-17 in December 2012 and NEASPEC-NOWPAP Workshop on Marine Biodiversity Conservations in March 2013. In the course of these consultations, the Secretariat has prepared technical papers and draft Terms of Reference (TOR) with regard to the role of NEASPEC in marine protected areas.

2. Further to the series of consultations, SOM-18 in November 2013 launched the North-East Asia Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) by adopting the network's Terms of References (TOR). The TOR spelled out the objectives, geographical scope, target MPAs, network membership, activity areas, organizational structure, programme operation, budget and roles of member States. According to the TOR, the Steering Committee was formed, consisting of one representative and one alternative member from each member State, to provide policy and operational guidance for NEAMPAN, and hold biennial meetings to plan network activities and review ongoing activities as well as network operation.

3. The first Steering Committee meeting was held in 19-20 March 2014 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, to further clarify national approaches to MPA, strategic direction of the Network, target MPAs, network membership, as well as organizational and managerial structures. The Meeting agreed on the TOR of the Steering Committee, which was consequently endorsed by SOM-19 in 2014. Key functions of the Steering Committee include policy and operational guidance on NEASPEC activities, as well as the planning and monitoring of NEASPEC activities. The Steering Committee will also make recommendations on new programmes and budgetary matters, if required, to SOM for consideration.

4. In addition to the endorsement of the TOR, SOM-19 also recommended on the Advisory Committee, requesting to include the full scale of expertise for its members as well as fair geographical representation into the selection criteria. SOM-19 also reviewed the Russian proposal on "Strengthening the Subregional Cooperation for the Development of the Marine and Coastal Specially Protected Areas Network", which has the objectives of conducting general analysis of the state of marine biodiversity and its dynamics with climate changes and economic activity; adapting scientific criteria on the identification of ecologically and/or biologically significant marine areas; and developing recommendations to improve the environmental management system in near-border areas, basins and coastal marine zones. As the proposed objectives and activities are not in line with the plan of NEAMPAN and considering the budget constraints, SOM-19 thus requested the revision of proposal to focus on the identified target MPAs and activities.

5. The Strategic Plan of NEASPEC, including a plan for the programme on marine protected areas, was discussed in the meeting of NEASPEC focal points held on 16 October 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The Meeting highlighted that the Strategic Plan of NEASPEC should contribute and consider the linkages to the SDGs. In that context, the Meeting discussed whether the scope of the MPA programme should also be broadened to other issues of the marine environment. Given the budgetary scale of the programme and the approach of NEASPEC to focus on practical activities, it was therefore concluded to keep the current scope of the programme.

II. MPAS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

6. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes Goals that are closely related to the MPAs, highlighting the contribution of the marine environment in achieving sustainable development. In particular, Goal 14 includes target of conserving 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas (target 14.5), echoing the Aichi biodiversity target (target 11) *to improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity*¹.

Table 1. Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its Targets

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels

14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans,...

¹ Strategic Goal C: To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity - Target 11 “By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.” <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>

14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information

14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies...

14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism

14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, ...

14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets

14.c Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS,...

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE NEAMPAN

7. As reported to SOM-19, Steering Committee members had nominated target MPAs of respective country as NEAMPAN sites, shown in Table 1. The Secretariat thus planned to invite authorities and stakeholders from each NEAMPAN site and hold a workshop in June 2015 at Suncheon, Republic of Korea. This Workshop aimed to facilitate exchange of experiences in the management of MPAs, to identify common challenges and interests for future NEAMPAN activities. Steering Committee members were notified in November 2014 by email communication, with official invitations to member States and logistical arrangements for participants were prepared during the first-half of 2015. However, the Workshop had to be cancelled due to the outbreak of MERS in ROK and the strict rules on overseas travel of officials in some countries.

8. In this regard, the Secretariat is planning to organize the workshop of authorities and stakeholders working on the management in one of NEAMPAN sites in China in March or April 2016, by inviting all NEAMPAN sites; and a MPA seminar on 15-17 June 2016 in Suncheon, Republic of Korea. By organizing two events in 2016, stakeholders of the NEAMPAN sites could strengthen their knowledge by sharing information and experiences, discussing their challenges or management plan, and expanding their networks and connections with other NEAMPAN sites.

9. In the meantime, the Secretariat has been preparing the profile of each nominated MPA based on information provided by Steering Committee members, highlighting general

features and managerial or environmental challenges. Based on the profile, the Secretariat is developing a NEAMPAN website to provide up-to-date information to member States, NEAMPAN sites as well as the public.

10. Formulation of Advisory Committee is on-going. The Secretariat has earlier prepared a list of international organizations and programmes to serve as Advisory Committee members and circulated to Steering Committee members for their review and decision. The Secretariat has also sought for the nomination of individual experts from the Steering Committee members. The Steering Committee may be invited to discuss further on the role and identification of the Advisory Committee, together with the future activities of NEAMPAN.

Table 2. Priority Target MPAs nominated by member governments

MPA's name	Location	Protected targets	Management authority
China			
Nanji Islands National Marine Nature Reserve	Pingyang, Zhejiang	Marine shellfish and algae as well as their habitats	National
Shankou Mangrove National Marine Nature Reserve	Hepu, Guangxi	Mangrove ecosystem	National
Beilun Estuary National Marine Nature Reserve	Fangchenggang, Guangxi	Mangrove ecosystem	National
National Nature Reserve of Dazhou Island Marine Ecosystems	Wanning, Hainan	Swiftlet, its habitat and the marine ecological system	National
Sanya Coral Reef National Nature Reserve	Sanya, Hainan	Coral reef and the marine ecological system	National
Changyi National Marine Ecology Special Protected Area	Changyi, Shandong	<i>Tamarix chinensis</i> , marine organisms and coastal wetland ecosystems	National
Japan			
Shiretoko National Park	Hokkaido Island	Blackiston's Fish owl, <i>Viola kitamiana</i> , salmonid species, cetacean species, Steller's Sea Lion, and Spotted Seals	National
Republic of Korea			
Muan Wetland Protected Area [<i>replaced</i>]	Muan-gun, Jeollanam-do	Mud mussel, Saunder's Gull, Black-faced spoonbill, and Chinese Egret	National
Suncheon Bay Wetland Protected Area	Suncheon-si, Jeollanam-do	Hooded Crane, <i>phragmites communis</i> community	National

Russian Federation			
Far-Eastern State Marine Biosphere Reserve (FEMBR)	Vladivostok	Conservation of marine ecosystems and support for marine biological research	National
Sikhote-Alin State Natural Biosphere Reserve	Primorsky	Conservation and study of the natural functioning of natural complexes in totality	National

IV. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

11. The Meeting may wish to request member States to give special consideration in encouraging and supporting concerned officials to participate in NEAMPAN activities including the workshop and seminar in 2016, and provide guidance to the Secretariat on necessary preparation.

12. The Meeting may wish to request member States to provide further guidance on NEAMPAN activities including Advisory Committee and NEAMPAN website, and the involvement of national agencies through Steering Committee.

13. The Meeting may wish to invite member States to propose NEAMPAN activities which are in line with the activity scope of the Network, as contained in the Terms of Reference, and to provide financial/in-kind contributions to activities.

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