Marine and coastal biodiversity
(Agenda Item 10)

Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Hyderabad, India, 8-19 October, 2012

Summary of Recommendations

COP 11 provides an unparalleled opportunity to catalyze progress on the ocean commitments agreed at Rio+20. IUCN urges COP11 to:

- Endorse the summary reports on marine areas meeting the CBD criteria for ecological or biological significance contained in the annex to SBSTTA XVI/4 as a reference for States and intergovernmental organizations;
- Request the Executive Secretary to submit the endorsed summary reports to the UNGA and the UN Working Group on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, as well as to Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations;
- Invite the UN Working Group on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction to explore mechanisms to encourage States and competent intergovernmental organizations to respond to the information on areas beyond national jurisdiction contained in the EBSA summary reports and to report back on actions taken;
- Support the continued development of the EBSA repository and development of an information-sharing mechanism;
- Provide adequate, timely and sustainable support for training and capacity building;
- Accord high priority to the organization of additional workshops on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria;
- Encourage, where relevant, the involvement of women, indigenous and local communities in the EBSA description processes and in the development of any management measures, particularly for areas affecting local and traditional community interests;
- Establish a process to develop additional criteria for describing areas of social, cultural and also scientific significance relevant to marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use;
- Urge fisheries management bodies to improve their implementation of the ecosystem approach and to include biodiversity considerations as a core part of their work;
- Support the request to the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with others, to update the coral bleaching workplan to increase funding and capacity;
- Urge Parties and others to take measures to minimize the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise and support an expert workshop for this purpose;
- Welcome and adopt the voluntary guidelines on environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments and encourage their wide implementation;
- Provide assistance and promote capacity building on the application of the EIA and SEA voluntary guidelines;
- Call for additional efforts through the UN Working Group on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction to establish an effective legal and institutional framework and capacity-building support structure for EIAs and SEAs for processes or activities affecting marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction; and
- Support the establishment of regional marine invasive advisory groups to assist in the development of action programmes for control and management.
Introduction

World leaders at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012 adopted strong commitments to protect the oceans and maintain their biodiversity. Paragraph 158 of the Rio+20 Outcome document provides:1

"We therefore commit to protect and restore the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, and to maintain their biodiversity, enabling their conservation and sustainable use for present and future generations, and to effectively apply an ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach in the management, in accordance with international law, of activities impacting on the marine environment, to deliver on all three dimensions of sustainable development."

This Conference of the Parties’ (COP11) support for the recommendations from the 16th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA16) on marine and coastal biodiversity will be an important step toward implementing the Rio+20 ocean commitments contained in paragraphs 158-177, which include:

1) Protecting the health, resilience and productivity of oceans and biodiversity within and beyond national jurisdiction
2) Application of an ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach in the management of activities impacting on the marine environment;
3) Capacity building to help developing countries realize the benefits from conservation and sustainable use of the oceans;
4) Reducing pollution in marine ecosystems, including marine debris, particularly plastics;
5) Addressing the problems of sea level rise and coastal erosion;
6) Addressing ocean acidification and climate change;
7) Restoring fish stocks and protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems and species;
8) Eliminating subsidies that contribute to illegal fishing and overcapacity;
9) Supporting international cooperation and technical collaboration on coral reefs; and
10) Promoting the importance of area-based conservation measures, including MPAs.

Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (SBSTTA XVI/4)

COP10 launched a process of regional workshops to facilitate the description of areas that meet the scientific criteria for identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs). This is a scientific and technical exercise. As agreed in COP Decision X/29, the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas is "a matter for State and competent intergovernmental organizations, in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea."

The two CBD-led workshops for the Western South Pacific and the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic regions were convened in collaboration with Parties and competent organizations and regional initiatives supported by global contribution of scientific inputs using the best available scientific and technical information. A scientific workshop for the North-East Atlantic was also convened by the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission and the OSPAR Commission in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat.

The results of these regional workshops are very important as they can provide a scientific basis for enabling States and competent intergovernmental organizations to identify areas that would benefit from enhanced conservation and management as part of their recent commitments at Rio+20 to protecting the oceans and maintaining their biodiversity. They can also underpin efforts to implement existing duties to protect and preserve the marine environment including rare and fragile ecosystems and habitats of depleted, threatened and endangered species2, to conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity and to monitor the impacts of their processes and activities on marine biodiversity3, and commitments to facilitate the application of ecosystem approaches, the precautionary approach and the establishment

1 The Future We Want (June 2012) http://www.unsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%20June%202012336pm.pdf
2 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) articles 192 and 194.5.
3 CBD articles 3, 4, 5, 7 and 11.
of representative systems of marine protected areas.4

The results of the CBD-led workshops and the Mediterranean process have been reviewed by SBSTTA16, and summary reports are now before COP11 for endorsement. The next step envisaged under Decision X/29 is for the endorsed reports to be included in the CBD repository and submitted to the United Nations General Assembly and particularly its Working Group on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction5 as well as other relevant international organizations, Parties and other Governments.

IUCN strongly supports the recommendations in SBSTTA XVI/4, and in particular urges COP11 to:

✓ Endorse the summary reports contained in the annex to SBSTTA XVI/4 as a reference for States and intergovernmental organizations;

✓ Request the Executive Secretary to include the summary reports in the EBSA repository and to submit them to the UNGA and its Working Group on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, as well as to Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations;

✓ Support the continued development of the EBSA repository and the development of an information sharing mechanism;

✓ Provide adequate, timely and sustainable support for training and capacity building, including the further development and translation of the EBSA training manual and modules, workshops and other related activities; and

✓ Accord high priority to the organization of additional workshops on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria to cover all regions where Parties wish workshops to be held.

In addition to the suggested recommendations in SBSTTA XVI/4, IUCN also urges COP11 to:

✓ Invite the UN Working Group on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction to explore mechanisms to encourage States and competent intergovernmental organizations to respond to the information on areas beyond national jurisdiction contained in the EBSA summary reports and to report back on any actions taken.

IUCN also urges States, alone or in collaboration (including through RFMOs and relevant regional seas organizations, NGOs and funding partners) to:

✓ Continue and increase the work aiming at identifying EBSAs and vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs); more particularly, specify what should be done once the criteria have been applied in an area and scientific description of areas meeting criteria for VME or EBSA is undertaken;

✓ Promote cooperative work between the CBD and FAO on EBSAs and VMEs in the same area; and

✓ Adopt additional measures to restore fish and invertebrate stocks and maintain their reproductive potential and to restore depleted, threatened and endangered species.

IUCN further highlights the importance of integrating the traditional knowledge of women, indigenous and local communities into the description of EBSAs and involving them in the development of any measures that may affect their interests. IUCN also underscores the importance of developing criteria for describing areas important for social, cultural as well as scientific reasons relevant to the conservation or sustainable use of marine biodiversity.

IUCN accordingly urges COP11 to:

✓ Encourage the involvement of women, indigenous and local communities in the EBSA description processes and in the development of any management measures, particularly for areas affecting local and traditional community interests; and

✓ Establish a process to develop additional criteria for describing areas of social, cultural and also scientific significance relevant to marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, with appropriate scientific and technical rationales.

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4 WSSD Plan of Implementation, paragraph 32(c); CBD Aichi target 11.
5 UN Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.
Sustainable fisheries and addressing adverse impacts of human activities on marine and coastal biodiversity (SBSTTA XVI/5)

To achieve the Aichi Targets 5, 6, 8 and 10 will require enhanced efforts to address the full range of human impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity, including fisheries management, pollution including excess nutrients and marine debris, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, and anthropogenic underwater noise.

IUCN supports the recommendations in SBSTTA XVI/5, and in particular IUCN urges COP11 to:

- Urge fisheries management bodies to improve their implementation of the ecosystem approach and to include biodiversity considerations as a core part of their work; and

- Encourage the Executive Secretary to collaborate with relevant bodies to improve how biodiversity concerns are addressed, including with respect to destructive fishing practices, bycatch and fisheries on lower trophic levels (particularly in maintaining the structure and function of the ecosystem).

With respect to coral bleaching, IUCN urges COP11 to:

- Request to the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with others, to update the coral bleaching workplan to increase funding and capacity to respond to increasing severity and incidence of coral bleaching and ocean acidification in tropical seas;

- Expand the effort to include seagrasses and mangroves; and

- Support regional or sub-regional capacity building workshops for this purpose.

With respect to anthropogenic underwater noise, IUCN calls on COP11 to:

- Urge Parties and others to take measures to minimize the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise using best available technologies and best environmental practice;

- Support an expert workshop to share knowledge and develop practical guidance and toolkits for these purposes.

With respect to ocean acidification, IUCN fully supports the recommendations in SBSTTA XVI/5 and underscores the importance of enhancing understanding and awareness of the impacts of ocean acidification on biodiversity and ecosystem functions and accelerating action to reduce its impacts.

With respect to marine debris, IUCN fully supports the recommendations in SBSTTA XVI/5.

Marine spatial planning and voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments in marine and coastal areas (SBSTTA XVI/6)

The CBD draft voluntary guidelines for EIAs and SEAs in marine and coastal areas can provide important new tools for preventing significant adverse impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity. They can help to identify potential significant adverse impacts of processes or activities under national jurisdiction or control and enable the adoption of appropriate management measures.

In this way they can enhance the sustainable development of ocean and coastal resources while conserving biodiversity. 6

IUCN urges COP11 to:

- Welcome and adopt the voluntary guidelines and encourage their wide implementation by States for processes or activities carried out under their jurisdiction or control and by competent international organizations;

- Provide assistance and promote capacity building on the application of the voluntary guidelines;

- Enable the full and effective participation of civil society, including women groups, indigenous and local communities; and

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6 Applicable articles include CBD articles 3, 4b, 5, 7 and 14 and UNCLOS articles 192, 194.5 and 204-206.
Call for additional efforts through the UN Working Group on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction to establish an effective legal and institutional framework and capacity-building support structure for EIAs and SEAs for processes or activities under national jurisdiction or control affecting marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.

With respect to marine spatial planning, IUCN fully supports the recommendations in SBSTTA XVI/6.

Proposals on integrating biodiversity considerations into climate-change-related activities, including addressing gaps in knowledge and information (XVI/8)

IUCN urges COP11 to:

- Establish regional Marine Invasive Species Advisory Groups to provide assistance to countries to minimize the potential impacts of invasive species, particularly for MPAs.