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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
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Agenda item 10.2

DECISION ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AT ITS ELEVENTH MEETING

XI/18. *Marine and coastal biodiversity: sustainable fisheries and addressing adverse impacts of human activities, voluntary guidelines for environmental assessment, and marine spatial planning*

A. *Addressing biodiversity considerations in fisheries management, and addressing adverse impacts of human activities on marine and coastal biodiversity*

The Conference of the Parties,

Recognizing that addressing biodiversity considerations in fisheries management and addressing the adverse impacts of human activities on marine and coastal biodiversity, including coral bleaching, ocean acidification and anthropogenic underwater noise, support the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5, 6, 8 and 10,¹ and also that other adverse impacts of human activities on marine and coastal biodiversity, including pollution, need to be addressed with a view to achieving these Targets,

Recalling paragraph 158 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), “The Future We Want”,² and mindful of the current and potential role that marine and coastal ecosystems play in supporting sustainable development and poverty eradication,

¹ Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

Target 6: By 2020, all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

Target 8: By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.

Target 10: By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification, are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

² Adopted in General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

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Also recalling paragraph 168 of the outcome document,

Addressing biodiversity considerations in sustainable fisheries

1. *Expresses its gratitude* to the Government of Norway for funding and hosting the Joint Expert Meeting on Addressing Biodiversity Concerns in Sustainable Fisheries, convened by the Executive Secretary in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the Fisheries Expert Group of the Commission on Ecosystem Management of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, in Bergen, Norway, from 7 to 9 December 2011, and *welcomes* the report of the meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/13);

2. *Recognizing* that fisheries management organizations are the competent bodies to manage fisheries and, depending on the situation in different regions, should have roles to play in addressing the impacts of fisheries on biodiversity, *notes* the need for further improvement and implementation of the ecosystem approach in fisheries management by enhancing the capacity of these fisheries management organizations, constructive inter-agency collaboration, and full and meaningful participation by a wide range of experts on biodiversity, indigenous and local communities, taking into consideration Articles 8(j) and 10(c) of the Convention, and relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, in the fisheries management process;

3. *Encourages* constructive collaboration between biodiversity and fisheries bodies, and *invites* fisheries management bodies at national and regional levels, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to ensure that biodiversity considerations are a part of their work;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to transmit the report of the joint expert meeting referred to in paragraph 1 above to Parties, other Governments, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and regional fisheries management organizations, and to collaborate with these bodies with a view to improving how biodiversity concerns are addressed for sustainable fisheries;

Progress made in the implementation of the specific work plan on coral bleaching

5. *Welcomes* the report on progress made in the implementation of the specific work plan on coral bleaching,³ which contains information on the barriers to implementation and ways to overcome them, including specific actions to mobilize financial resources (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/11), and *takes note* of the key messages of that report, as set out in annex I to document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/6;

6. *Notes* that progress has been made since the specific work plan on coral bleaching was adopted;

7. *Recalling* Aichi Biodiversity Target 10, *expresses its deep concern* that climate change will increase the severity and incidence of coral bleaching and ocean acidification in the twenty-first century;

8. *Also expresses its concern* that many recurrent capacity and financial challenges remain, which preclude significant progress in developing countries that still struggle to cope with localized stressors and do not have the capacity or financial resources to fully incorporate climate-change impacts, as well as other relevant stressors, into coral-reef or coastal-management programmes;

³ Decision VII/5, annex I, appendix 1.

9. *Takes note* of the urgent need to update the specific work plan on coral bleaching, taking into consideration other global impacts on coral caused by climate change, most notably, projected impacts of ocean acidification, but also the effects of tropical storms and rising sea levels, and recognizes that the projected impacts of ocean acidification need to be integrated into management frameworks alongside interaction with local stressors;

10. *Also notes* that meeting the growing challenge of climate-change impacts on coral reefs will require significant investment to increase capacity for the effective management of future bleaching events and other stressors and to scale up the delivery of resilience assessments in all coral-reef regions, and that identifying a range of viable financial mechanisms to achieve these goals is critical;

11. *Recognizes* the need for managers of coral ecosystems to:

(a) Understand the vulnerability of corals to multiple stressors;

(b) Plan proactively for climate risks and associated secondary effects, applying ecosystem-based adaptation measures;

(c) Manage coral reefs as socio-ecological systems undergoing change due in many cases to climate change;

(d) Formulate adaptation strategies that aim to enhance the resilience of ecosystems to enable the continued provision of goods and services;

12. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to incorporate issues concerning the impacts of climate change on coral reefs and their implications for coastal management programmes, including, as appropriate, the elements specified in paragraph 11 above, into regional or subregional capacity-building workshops;

13. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to collaborate with Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, and with indigenous and local communities, to develop proposals to update the specific work plan on coral bleaching through an addendum to the work plan that addresses the needs set out in paragraph 11 above, and to submit the draft addendum for consideration at a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

14. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, to continue implementing the specific work plan on coral bleaching, including necessary capacity-building, in order to respond to the increasing severity and frequency of coral bleaching and ocean acidification;

Impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity

15. *Welcomes* the scientific synthesis on the impacts of underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/12), and *takes note* of the key messages of that report, as set out in annex II to the note by the Executive Secretary on addressing adverse impacts of human activities on marine and coastal biodiversity prepared for the sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/6);

16. *Takes note* of resolution 10.24 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species at its tenth meeting, which provides guidance on further steps to abate underwater noise pollution, where necessary, for the protection of cetaceans and other migratory species;

17. *Notes* that anthropogenic noise may have both short- and long-term negative consequences for marine animals and other biota in the marine environment, that this issue is predicted to

increase in significance, and that uncontrolled increases in anthropogenic noise could add further stress to oceanic biota;

18. *Encourages* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, according to their priorities, to:

- (a) Promote research with a view to further improving understanding of the issue;
- (b) Promote awareness of the issue among relevant stakeholders, both nationally and regionally;
- (c) Take measures, as appropriate, to minimize the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine biodiversity, including the full range of best available technologies and best environmental practices where appropriate and needed, drawing upon existing guidance; and
- (d) Develop indicators and explore frameworks for monitoring underwater noise for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity, and report on progress to a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

19. *Noting* the need for consistent terminology to describe underwater noise, *requests* the Executive Secretary to collaborate with Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to prepare, subject to availability of financial resources, a draft set of consistent terminology for consideration by a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

20. *Noting* the gaps and limitations in existing guidance, including the need to update it in the light of improving scientific knowledge, and recognizing a range of complementary initiatives under way, *requests* the Executive Secretary to collaborate with Parties, other Governments, and competent organizations, including the International Maritime Organization, the Convention on Migratory Species, the International Whaling Commission, indigenous and local communities and other relevant stakeholders, to organize, subject to availability of financial resources, an expert workshop with a view to improving and sharing knowledge on underwater noise and its impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity, and to develop practical guidance and toolkits to minimize and mitigate the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity, including marine mammals, in order to assist Parties and other Governments in applying management measures, as appropriate, and *also requests* the Executive Secretary to make the report of the workshop available for consideration by a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The workshop should cover issues such as the development of acoustic mapping of areas of interest, among other things;

21. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to bring this decision to the attention of the organizations referred to in paragraph 20 above;

Progress made in the joint expert review process to monitor and assess the impacts of ocean acidification on marine and coastal biodiversity

Recalling paragraphs 63 to 67 of decision X/29,

22. *Expresses its gratitude* to the Government of Spain for funding the Expert Meeting to Develop a Series of Joint Expert Review Processes to Monitor and Assess the Impacts of Ocean Acidification on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, convened by the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization, in Montreal, Canada, from 19 to 20 October 2011, and *welcomes* the report of the Expert Meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/14);

23. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to collaborate with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, relevant scientific groups, other relevant organizations, and indigenous and local communities on the preparation of a systematic review document on the impacts of ocean acidification on biodiversity and ecosystem functions, which will provide a targeted synthesis of the biodiversity implications of ocean acidification for marine and coastal systems, including information on the less-reported paleo-oceanographic research, building upon the synthesis provided in CBD Technical Series No. 46, and make it available for consideration by a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, with a view to forwarding it to Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations and transmitting it to the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

24. *Takes note* of the elements in annex III to document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/6 as guidance for practical responses to the impacts of ocean acidification on marine and coastal biodiversity, and *encourages* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to make use of this guidance, as appropriate, to reduce various threats from ocean acidification to vulnerable ecosystems and to enhance the resilience of ecosystems through a range of area-based or other management measures, in addition to measures to reduce CO₂ emissions;

Addressing impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity

25. *Welcomes* the preparation by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility of a report on the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/15) and *takes note* of the key messages of that report, as set out in annex IV to document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/6;

26. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations and indigenous and local communities, subject to the availability of financial resources, to:

(a) Invite Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, including the Convention on Migratory Species, to submit information on the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats;

(b) Compile and synthesize submissions by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, along with additional scientific and technical information, as input to an expert workshop;

(c) Organize an expert workshop to prepare practical guidance on preventing and mitigating the significant adverse impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats that can be applied by Parties and other Governments in their implementation of the programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity;

(d) Submit the compilation/synthesis referred to in subparagraph 26(b) above, and the practical guidance referred to in subparagraph 26(c) above, for consideration by a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

27. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to availability of financial resources, to include the issue of marine debris in regional capacity-building workshops in order to discuss ways to

prevent and reduce the impact of marine debris on biodiversity and strengthen research on the reduction and management of marine debris, with a focus on addressing sources.

B. Voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments in marine and coastal areas

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decision VIII/28, by which it endorsed voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments,

Noting that marine areas have important ecological differences from terrestrial and coastal areas,

Expressing appreciation for the work of the Manila Expert Workshop, referred to in paragraph 49 of decision X/29, and the additional work by Parties and relevant organizations, facilitated by the Executive Secretary, called for in paragraph 50 of decision X/29 and recommendation XVI/6, Part B, of the Subsidiary Body,

1. *Takes note* of the voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments annotated specifically for biodiversity in marine and coastal areas, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in accordance with Article 4 of the Convention,⁴ *recognizing* that these annotated voluntary guidelines will be most useful for activities that are currently unregulated, with no procedures for assessing impacts, *noting* that the annotations are intended to cover the diverse range of marine and coastal ecosystems, including issues related to areas beyond national jurisdiction, and *emphasizing* that the annotated guidelines are without prejudice to the ongoing consideration of marine biodiversity in United Nations General Assembly processes, in particular the United Nations 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;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to make the voluntary guidelines referred to in paragraph 1 above available as a reference for Parties, other Governments and United Nations specialized agencies, as well as relevant United Nations General Assembly processes (i.e., the United Nations 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 and the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects), as well as regional seas organizations, regional fisheries management organizations and agreements on fisheries management, as appropriate;

3. *Encourages*, as appropriate, Parties, other Governments and competent organizations, in accordance with national and international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to use the voluntary guidelines and to adapt and apply them as may be considered necessary in accordance with their national circumstances and priorities;

4. *Invites* Parties and other Governments to share, as appropriate, information on their progress in applying these voluntary guidelines, to consider including such information in their fifth and subsequent national reports, and to provide suggestions for further refinement of the voluntary guidelines;

5. *Invites* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to facilitate further research to fill gaps in knowledge, as highlighted in the voluntary guidelines on marine and coastal areas, in particular in areas beyond national jurisdiction;

⁴ As contained in the annex to document UNEP/CBD/COP/11/23.

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to availability of financial resources, to provide further assistance to promote capacity-building on the application of the voluntary guidelines, to compile information on experience in applying the voluntary guidelines and to report on progress to a meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

C. Marine spatial planning

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Acknowledges* the synthesis document on the experience and use of marine spatial planning (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/18), and *takes note* of the key messages thereof set out in section III of document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/7;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to availability of financial resources, to collaborate with Parties, other Governments, United Nations specialized agencies, regional organizations, including Large Marine Ecosystem programmes, other relevant organizations and indigenous and local communities to:

(a) Develop a web-based information-sharing system linking existing information sources⁵ on marine spatial planning on the web;

(b) Continue to compile information on experience and use of marine spatial planning practices and make the compiled information available to Parties, other Governments and competent organizations to evaluate its usefulness and implications;

(c) Convene an expert workshop to provide consolidated practical guidance and a toolkit for marine spatial planning, building upon existing guidance,⁶ subject to availability of financial resources, in order to complement and further enhance the existing cross-sectoral efforts of Parties and other Governments on the application of the ecosystem approach to the implementation of integrated marine and coastal management, the identification of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the design and establishment of conservation and management measures, as appropriate. The expert workshop should:

(i) Review existing guidance and toolkits on marine spatial planning;

(ii) Identify gaps;

(iii) Develop proposals to fill these gaps; and

(iv) If considered necessary, prepare consolidated practical guidance and a toolkit on marine spatial planning;

(d) Make the report of the workshop available for consideration by a meeting of the Subsidiary Body prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

(e) Make the guidance and toolkits referred to above available to Parties, other Governments and competent organizations;

(f) Disseminate awareness-raising materials on marine spatial planning to decision-makers, based on the synthesis document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/18) and its key messages, as contained in document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/7), with a view to facilitating the application of practical guidance and toolkits, as referred to above;

⁵ For example, the web page of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission on marine spatial planning: http://www.unesco-ioc-marinesp.be/marine_spatial_planning_msp.

⁶ For example, the IOC/UNESCO guidelines on marine spatial planning.

(g) Organize training workshops, subject to availability of financial resources, closely linked to existing capacity-building efforts on marine protected areas⁷ and ecologically or biologically significant marine areas,⁸ in order to increase the capacity of Parties, especially developing country Parties, to use marine spatial planning as a tool to enhance existing efforts in integrated marine and coastal area management, identification of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, design and establishment of conservation and management measures, including marine protected area networks and other area-based management efforts, and other marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable-use practices.

⁷ For example, the UNDOALOS training manual on marine protected areas.

⁸ For example, training manuals and modules on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas prepared by the Executive Secretary, as referred to in paragraph 19 of decision XI/17.