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TRACK 4: GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

SESSION 4.3

Realizing the SDGs through Strategic Partnerships: A Future Trajectory for Action in the Northwest Pacific

CONVENER:



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Iloilo City, Philippines, 28 November 2018

Partnership Hub Track 4: Partnership and Governance

SESSION 4.3: Realizing the SDGs through Strategic Partnerships: A Future Trajectory for Action in the Northwest Pacific

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Partnership Hub Dialogue Chair:

Dr. Lev Neretin, Senior Coordinator, Northwest Pacific Action Plan

Introduction

- 1.1. The session focused on how the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (or NOWPAP), one of the eighteen Regional Seas Programmes of the UN Environment (or UNEP), could keep a momentum and strengthen further regional cooperation and partnership building, which have facilitated scientific assessments, contributed positively to institutional development and were part of the regional ocean governance in the Northwest Pacific region. More specifically, the session explored the challenges and opportunities for regional partnerships and cooperation that are necessary to realize Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and achieving the SDGs.
- 1.2. Presentations were followed by more in-depth discussion focused on marine litter management, pollution reduction and eutrophication, preparedness and response to oil and chemical spills, coastal zone management, and regional ocean governance.
- 1.3. Speakers emphasized that to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, NOWPAP would need to address the following three-interconnected challenges: (i) Building lasting regional peace through science diplomacy; (ii) Supporting sustainable growth and prosperity; and (iii) Protecting the marine and coastal environment.

Opening remarks

- 2.1. **Dr. Habib El-Habr**, Coordinator of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) of UNEP, opened the session. He highlighted the resolutions and decisions of the Third UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-3) calling for the accelerated action and strengthened partnerships to work towards a pollution-free planet. He noted the indispensable role of private sector in driving action towards pollution reduction. Public sector should work together with the private sector by establishing and nurturing innovative partnerships as mandated by Sustainable Development Goal 17.
- 2.2. Since the UN Environment launched the Clean Seas campaign in February 2017, more than 50 governments – accounting for more than half the world’s coastline – have signed up to the campaign with many making specific commitments to protect oceans, encourage recycling and cut back on single-use plastics.
- 2.3. He congratulated NOWPAP on the adoption of its Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023 in June 2018 fulfilling the first milestone of its voluntary commitment to the Global Ocean Conference on SDG 14. The Medium-term Strategy highlights the importance of a holistic approach to preventing and reversing environmental degradation by focusing on the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.

Evolving ocean governance in the East Asia region: Challenges and Opportunities for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

- 3.1 **Dr. Suh-Yong Chung**, Professor, Center for Global Climate and Marine Governance of Korea University discussed the environmental governance landscape in the North East Asia and emphasized the importance of sustainable ocean management to achieve SDGs in the region. He highlighted the geopolitical conditions in the NOWPAP region, including historical tensions, lacking culture of multilateralism, Korean peninsula, and large population density and rapid economic growth.
- 3.2 He pointed out that there are five enablers for the effective regional environmental cooperation aimed at achieving SDGs: political leadership; scientific capabilities; financial resources; potential for growth; and mainstreaming climate change.
- 3.3 He noted that many institutional arrangements follow the three evolutionary steps. In the initial process, small and individual activities play a major role followed by the institutionalization during the second phase and creating synergies with other players during the third phase. The speaker summarized that NOWPAP future development should be informed by the three major pillars: (i) Building lasting regional peace through science

diplomacy; (ii) Supporting sustainable growth and prosperity; and (iii) Protecting the marine and coastal environment.

Supporting scientific and technical cooperation in the Northwest Pacific region: Preparing for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)

- 4.1. **Mr. Wenxi Zhu**, Head of the UNESCO/IOC Sub-commission for the Western Pacific (IOC-WESTPAC), emphasized the important role of science and scientific cooperation to inform maritime policies, provide information for evidence-based decision-making and contribute to the achievement of SDGs. Several flagship regional initiatives in this regard undertaken by IOC/WESTPAC were highlighted.
- 4.2. The Priorities and Areas of Action in Building Blue Partnerships of IOC-WESTPAC are to: strengthen science-policy interface for ocean governance; develop sustained ocean observations and services for maritime safety; safeguarding marine biodiversity and ecosystem health for green development; bolster institutional capacity for the Future We Want.
- 4.3. IOC-WESTPAC supports various capacity development activities, including initiation of “WESTPAC Young Scientist Forum” and the campaign “Bring Marine Science to School” launched recently. Regional Training and Research Center on Ocean Dynamics and Climate (RTRC-ODC), Regional Training and Research Center on Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health (RTRC-MarBEST) and Tailored National & Regional Trainings / Summer Schools have been in operation for some time.
- 4.4. The presenter noted the success of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 will depend on the engagement of various communities of practice, including Science Community, Business & Industries, Policy-makers and Practitioners, Civil Society and Donors. He highlighted that societal outcomes of the Decade will contribute to a *Clean Ocean* with identified, quantified and reduced pollution sources, a *Healthy and Resilient Ocean* with mapped and protected marine ecosystems, a *Predicted Ocean* where the society could foresee the future and change of ocean conditions, a *Safe Ocean*, which guarantees security of human communities, a *Sustainable Productive Ocean* providing food supply, and a *Transparent and Accessible Ocean* that all people have access to ocean data, information and technologies.
- 4.5. He summarized that ocean science is essential for the prosperity of NOWPAP countries. IOC-WESTPAC, in partnership with NOWPAP, could work together to advance knowledge and cooperation for peace and sustainability of ocean, seas and coastal resources. The UN Decade of Ocean Science provides a once-in-a-life-time opportunity to ensure that ocean science delivers greater benefits for both, the ocean ecosystem and society at large.

NOWPAP shall engage actively in the preparation and implementation of the UN Decade together with other partners.

Moderated discussion among the panelists

- 5.1. Session moderator, Dr. Lev Neretin, introduced the major priorities of the NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023 and its focus on the regional coordination and leadership in achieving SDG 14.
- 5.2. **Dr. Jungho Nam**, Research Fellow at the Korea Maritime Institute, highlighted the importance of integrated coastal and river basin management (ICM) and marine spatial planning (MSP) for the achievement of SDGs in the region and recommended for NOWPAP and mechanisms of regional ocean governance to continue mainstreaming ecosystem-based management into coastal and ocean policies of member states, strengthening transboundary cooperative mechanisms, basing decision-making processes on scientifically verified data/information, supporting management of land-based activities at the watershed level, undertaking region-wide assessments, galvanizing capacity building at the local and national levels, and re-aligning regional partnership towards the achievement of SDGs, including SDG 17: Partnerships.
- 5.3. **Dr. Anatoly Kachur**, Director of the NOWPAP Pollution Monitoring Centre (POMRAC) introduced that the development of the Ecological Quality Objectives as one of the major NOWPAP activities in the near future. Defining and achieving Good Environmental Status in marine areas through the development of regional Ecological Quality Objectives is a crucial step for NOWPAP. He noted eight major regional environmental issues - loss of habitats and landscapes; land-based pollution and pollution from incidents on the sea, eutrophication, introduction of invasive species, and marine litter pollution - identified by the Second State of the Marine Environment Report published by NOWPAP five years ago. The next, Third State of the Marine Environment Report, should update and provide new insights into the current situation in the coastal seas of East Asia and identify the role of NOWPAP in addressing marine environmental challenges. He also introduced the possible structure of the Third Report and called upon cooperation with regional and global partners in developing the Report.
- 5.4. **Dr. Seong Gil Kang**, Director of the NOWPAP Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MERRAC), provided an overview of major oil spills incidents in the region, and the implementation of the NOWPAP Regional Oil and HNS Spill Contingency Plan (RCP). He stated that NOWPAP MERRAC has successfully carried out its designated activities during the last 20 years. NOWPAP member states and international organizations recognized that MERRAC has provided a well-coordinated

- platform to member states, which helps them to build their national capacity against major oil spills and also guides them to work together when responding to oil spills.
- 5.5. He also highlighted that in case that major oil spill may occur in the region, joint response operation by mobilizing all available resources from member state should be carried out under the RCP. For this to happen, MERRAC cooperation mechanism should be more functional and easily accessible by constant review and update regarding detailed implementation plans, improved customs and immigration procedures for prompt assistance among the member states and technical solutions for a more effective and smooth compensation system.
- 5.6. The threats of chemical or Hazardous and Noxious Substances spills are increasing in this region. Preparing and responding to these spills requires a different set of response skills and expertise than in case of oil spills. NOWPAP member states have continued their efforts individually to establish their own national systems for HNS preparedness and response but regional cooperation in this area remains a challenge and should be strengthened.
- 5.7. He noted that to sustain and expand the regional cooperation mechanism on oil and chemical spills preparedness and response, additional external funds are necessary. Expansion of the MERRAC scope of work to cover newly emerging environmental issues faced by the maritime sector in the region and regulated by relevant IMO conventions (e.g., ballast water management, reduction of greenhouse emissions from shipping and others) should be explored further.
- 5.8. Concluding the session, Dr. Lev Neretin highlighted many excellent suggestions by speakers on how to strengthen regional ocean governance in East Asia and NW Pacific using NOWPAP mechanism. Progress towards achieving SDGs, particularly SDG 14 and promoting good ocean governance in the region would require the UN Environment Northwest Pacific Action Plan to develop new partnerships and build synergies with a network of relevant global, regional and national institutions.