

## **Report of the Thirteenth NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting**

### **Background leading to this meeting**

1. The Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Centre (CEARAC) is one of the four Regional Activity Centres (RACs) to coordinate activities relevant to specific components of the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP). Since its inception in 2002, CEARAC has been mainly working on monitoring and assessing harmful algal blooms including red tides (under Working Group 3) and application of remote sensing techniques to study the marine and coastal environment (Working Group 4).
2. Since 2008, when CEARAC initiated an activity on eutrophication as a joint work of WG3 and WG4, its foci have shifted to eutrophication and marine biodiversity, and CEARAC has implemented some activities on these areas in recent biennia.
3. The 12<sup>th</sup> CEARAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM) held in Toyama, Japan on 2-3 July in 2014 reviewed the progress of the on-going activities for the 2014-2015 biennium.
4. Prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> FPM, the Fourth CEARAC Expert Meeting was held in Toyama, Japan on 24 August in 2015 to review the progress of the specific CEARAC projects, namely pilot assessment on the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity in the selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region, trial application of the screening procedure of the NOWPAP Common Procedure for eutrophication assessment, and case studies on seagrass mapping in the selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region. Based on the results of current activities, directions of activities for the next biennium (2016-2017) were also suggested by the participants.
5. Coming to the end of the current biennium, the 13<sup>th</sup> FPM was held in Toyama, Japan on 25-26 August in 2015 to review the progress and expected outcomes of the current activities as well as to discuss the proposed workplan of CEARAC for the 2016-2017 biennium for adoption to be submitted to the 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM, which will be held in Beijing, China on 28-30 October in 2015.

**Agenda Item 1 Opening of the Meeting**

6. The meeting was opened at 9:00 at Sky Gallery in Tower 111 in Toyama, Japan, on 25 August 2015 by the Director of CEARAC, Mr. Kazuya KUMAGAI. He summarized the results of the Fourth CEARAC Expert Meeting. Then, welcoming remarks were made by the NOWPAP Coordinator, Dr. Alexander TKALIN. He commended CEARAC on its work, and lamented that other RACs except for POMRAC and other relevant organizations such as PICES were not present.

**Agenda Item 2 Organization of the Meeting**

7. The meeting elected Dr. Vladimir SHULKIN, FP of Russia, as the chairperson and Dr. Junlong LI, FP of China, as the rapporteur of the 13<sup>th</sup> CEARAC FPM.
8. It was proposed that decisions should be made by consensus and English was the working language of the meeting.

**Agenda Item 3 Adoption of the Agenda**

9. The elected Chairperson, Dr. SHULKIN introduced the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/1) and the Annotated Provisional Agenda (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/2).
10. The meeting adopted both documents.

**Agenda Item 4 Report of the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) on the implementation of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)**

11. Dr. TKALIN reported the progress of the entire NOWPAP activities since the 12<sup>th</sup> CEARAC FPM (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/3).
12. Dr. Yasuwo FUKUYO, FP of Japan, was concerned about the future of CEARAC and he hoped CEARAC will keep working on remote sensing. He also hoped that DINRAC and CEARAC will cooperate on biodiversity issues and utilize DINRAC's endangered species list. Ms. Nobuko KAJIURA, representative of NEASPEC Secretariat, asked what to expect in the future in light of budget cuts, and what the

priorities will be. Dr. TKALIN detailed some of the expected organizational changes in reply.

**Agenda Item 5 Report on the implementation of CEARAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium**

13. The Director of CEARAC reported the implementation of all CEARAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium, including marine litter activities so-called RAP MALI (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/4).
14. After discussions on Agenda from 5.1 to 5.4, the meeting adopted the report on the implementation and expenditure of CEARAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium.

**5.1 Pilot assessment on the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity in the selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region**

15. Dr. Takafumi YOSHIDA from the Secretariat of CEARAC reported the progress of the activity on pilot assessment on the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity in the selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/5). In the report, he presented a modified and simplified table of contents of the draft regional report.
16. Dr. FUKUYO expressed uneasiness of some titles in the draft table of contents of the draft regional report. Other meeting participants also pointed out the ambiguity of some chapter titles. After a small-group discussion, the Secretariat revised the table of contents of the draft regional report.
17. Regarding the change of the title of the regional report from 'major threats' to 'major pressures', Dr. SHULKIN suggested retaining the same title of the activity and the regional report for this biennium because the project has been approved by the 18<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM.
18. The meeting adopted the report.

**5.2 Trial application of the screening procedure of the NOWPAP Common Procedure for eutrophication assessment**

19. Dr. Genki TERAUCHI from the Secretariat of CEARAC reported the progress of the activity on trial application of the screening procedure of the NOWPAP Common Procedure for eutrophication assessment (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/6).
20. Dr. Junlong LI emphasized the importance of nutrients data for assessment of eutrophication and asked why they were not included as parameters in the screening procedure. Dr. TERAUCHI replied that COD was chosen instead of nutrients data at the 12<sup>th</sup> CEARAC FPM by consensus. He, however, mentioned the possibility of future updates of the common procedure to use nutrients data in substitution of COD, considering that a long term COD data is not available.
21. Dr. SHULKIN suggested constructing a database of in situ chlorophyll-a data provided from each member state. Dr. TERAUCHI agreed with this suggestion and promised to consider constructing such database on the website of the Marine Environment Watch Project.
22. After discussion, the meeting adopted the report.

### **5.3 Case studies on seagrass mapping in the selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region**

23. Dr. TERAUCHI from the Secretariat of CEARAC reported the progress of the activities on case studies on seagrass mapping in the selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/7).
24. Dr. FUKUYO asked whether the developed manual would be applied to all case studies for its evaluation.
25. Dr. TERAUCHI replied that he would make sure that the suggested methodology will be applied and evaluated in each case study.
26. Dr. TERAUCHI encouraged the member states to use the unspent 4,000 US dollars allocated for purchase of satellite images if it is necessary to achieve the case study objective.
27. The meeting adopted the report.

### **5.4 CEARAC Marine Litter Activities**

28. Dr. YOSHIDA from the Secretariat of CEARAC reported the progress of activities on marine litter, focusing on the case study on basin-wide collaborative actions to prevent land-based marine litter input in Japan, and a new activity on upgrading the Northwest Pacific Regional Node with budgetary support from GPA (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/8).
29. Dr. TKALIN asked the Secretariat of CEARAC to communicate with the Secretariat of PICES, because their new project related to tsunami debris is one of outputs of PICES activities on marine litter.
30. The meeting acknowledged the report.

**Agenda Item 6 Discussion on the proposed specific projects of CEARAC for the 2016-2017 biennium**

- 6.1 Development of a common procedure for assessment of the impacts of major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region**
31. Dr. YOSHIDA from the Secretariat of CEARAC presented a workplan on development of a common procedure for assessment of the impacts of major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/9).
  32. The meeting reiterated the role of CEARAC to focus on developing the assessment methodology rather than policy matters proposed in the original document (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/9).
  33. The Secretariat explained the necessity of information on national/regional policy on conservation of marine biodiversity, and then the meeting suggested reviewing the national strategy of each member state as part of this activity and be included as background information for the common procedure.
  34. With the revised version of the working document, the meeting exchanged their views on definition of used terms such as 'pressure', 'threat' and 'impact'. Since the future goal of this activity is providing the NOWPAP member states with a common procedure to assess impacts of major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region, the meeting agreed to leave the title of the document as it is with

adding the word ‘draft’ to clarify the exact work to be done in the 2016-2017 biennium.

35. The meeting adopted the revised workplan with a new title “Development of the draft common procedure for assessment of the impacts of major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region”, in principle. The Secretariat will collect information on the key term definitions of other relevant organizations and projects and share the working document with CEARAC FPS in collaboration with NOWPAP RCU within two months.

## **6.2 Feasibility study towards assessment of seagrass in the NOWPAP region**

36. Dr. TERAUCHI from the Secretariat of CEARAC presented a workplan on a feasibility study towards assessment of seagrass in the NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/10).
37. Dr. FUKUYO asked about the definition of the word “feasibility” used in the proposed activity title. Dr. TERAUCHI replied that feasibility here does not mean the technical feasibility of remote sensing to assess seagrass distribution, but the feasibility of assessing seagrass distribution along the entire coastline of the NOWPAP region using remote sensing techniques. He then added that the feasibility study report would have several options depending on the cost of satellite images and other resources including manpower to analyze those images.
38. Dr. Teruhisa KOMATSU, representative of IOC/WESTPAC, pointed out that the technical feasibility of remote sensing techniques must be examined in this biennium in the selected sea areas for the seagrass mapping case studies before implementing the proposed activity.
39. Dr. Joji ISHIZAKA, FP of Japan, suggested that the proposed activity title, “assessment of seagrass” to be changed to “assessment of seagrass distribution”. Dr. FUKUYO and Dr. SHULKIN concurred. Dr. TERAUCHI then agreed with this suggestion.
40. The meeting adopted the workplan with modifications to include “distribution” in the title and other places in the proposal.

## **6.3 CEARAC Marine Litter Activities**

41. Dr. YOSHIDA from the Secretariat of CEARAC presented a workplan on marine litter activities of CEARAC (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/11).
42. The meeting acknowledged the report.

**Agenda Item 7 Discussion on the draft workplan and budget of entire CEARAC activities for the 2016-2017 biennium and recommendation to the 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM**

43. The Director of CEARAC presented an entire workplan and budget for CEARAC activities for the 2016-2017 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 13/12).
44. The meeting adopted the report and agreed on the presented workplan.

**Agenda Item 8 Collaboration with other RACs and other regional/international organizations**

45. The Secretariat of CEARAC presented possible collaborative work with other RACs and NOWPAP partner organizations.
46. Dr. KOMATSU introduced the history of IOC/WETSPAC with its past and current work.
47. Ms. KAJIURA introduced their current work on MPAs, and asked continuous collaboration with NOWPAP.
48. Dr. Anatolii KACHUR, Director of POMRAC, expressed their commitment to collaborate with CEARAC in the future activities regardless of current difficulties which POMRAC faces.

**Agenda Item 9 Arrangement of the 14<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting**

49. The Director of CEARAC proposed to hold the 14<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting in spring 2016 in Toyama, Japan, and the meeting agreed with the proposal.

**Agenda Item 10 Other matters**

50. The meeting was invited to raise any other issues relevant to the CEARAC activities and there were no other issues raised.

**Agenda Item 11 Adoption of the report of the meeting**

51. A draft report of the 13<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting was prepared by the Secretariat of CEARAC with the help of the rapporteur. After review, the report was adopted unanimously.

**Agenda Item 12 Closure of the meeting**

52. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the 13<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting was closed by the chairperson at 14:47 on 26 August 2015.