

## Report of the Sixteenth 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 1999, 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 the study on the marine and coastal environment (Working Group 4).
2. In 2008, CEARAC started activities on eutrophication as a joint activity of WG3 and WG4. Then, in recent years, CEARAC's foci have shifted to marine biodiversity and seagrass distribution in accordance with five thematic elements in NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2012-2017 (MTS).
3. The 15<sup>th</sup> CEARAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM) held on 29-30 August 2017 reviewed and discussed the draft workplan with two budget plans (140,000 US dollars and 180,000 US dollars) for CEARAC activities for the 2018-2019 biennium which are in accordance with the new NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023. After the discussion, the meeting requested some modification on the workplan and agreed to submit it to the 22<sup>nd</sup> NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) held in December 2017.
4. The 22<sup>nd</sup> IGM approved the submitted workplan of NOWPAP for the 2018-2019 biennium with the entire budget of 1,300,000 US dollars. Then, CEARAC was allocated 185,000 US dollars for its planned activities with another 9,450 US dollars for its marine litter activities, by which all planned activities and additional activities of CEARAC are to be implemented after some modification are applied to its workplan.
5. At the 16<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP CEARAC FPM (10-11 May 2018, Toyama, Japan), CEARAC FPs reviewed the revised workplan and budget of CEARAC activities for the 2018-2019 biennium and provided practical guidance to the Secretariat of CEARAC to implement each planned activity in an effective and efficient manner.

### **Agenda Item 1 Opening of the Meeting**

6. The meeting was opened at 9:15 at Meeting Room 401 in Toyama Kenmin Kaikan, Toyama, Japan, on 10 May 2018 by Mr. Yuichi NAGASAKA, Director of CEARAC. Then, welcoming remarks were made by Dr. Lev NERETIN, Coordinator of NOWPAP RCU.

### **Agenda Item 2 Organization of the Meeting**

#### **2.1 Election of the officers**

7. The meeting elected Dr. Young-Nam KIM, FP of Korea as chairperson and Dr. Vladimir SHULKIN, FP of Russia as rapporteur.

#### **2.2 Organization of work**

8. It was proposed by the Secretariat of CEARAC that, for the purposes of the CEARAC FPM, the rules used in the meeting to be basically those of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), adjusted as appropriate to suit the nature of the meeting. Decisions should be made by consensus and English was the working language of the meeting.

### **Agenda Item 3 Adoption of the agenda**

9. Mr. NAGASAKA explained Agenda items of the 16<sup>th</sup> FPM while touching upon the decisions of the 22<sup>nd</sup> NOWPAP IGM held in 2017 (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/1, UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/2).
10. After reviewing the agenda items, the meeting adopted both documents.

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

11. Dr. Ning LIU and Dr. NERETIN, the representatives of NOWPAP RCU reported the progress of the entire NOWPAP activities since the 15<sup>th</sup> CEARAC FPM held on 29-30 August 2017, Toyama, Japan (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/3) with the progress of the development of the NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023 (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/Ref 5).

12. Dr. NERETIN made remarks regarding the Ref 10 document by informing CEARAC FPs about the request from UNEP to use NOWPAP as a regional reporting mechanism for several SDG 14 related indicators. For CEARAC, indicator 14.1.1: Index of Coastal Eutrophication (ICEP) and Floating Plastic Debris Density are of relevance.
13. Dr. KIM and Ms. Wakako TSUKASAKI, Alternate of Japan, thanked for Dr. LIU for his report and responded to Dr. NERETIN, noting his points and concluding that this issue would be discussed and clarified later.
14. The meeting acknowledged the report.

#### **Agenda Item 5 Report on CEARAC activities for the 2016-2017 biennium**

15. Mr. NAGASAKA reported CEARAC activities for the 2016-2017 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/4). Then, more detailed reports on two specific projects were presented by Dr. Takafumi YOSHIDA and Dr. Genki TERAUCHI from the Secretariat of CEARAC, respectively: assessment of major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/Ref 2) and feasibility study towards assessment of seagrass distribution in the NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/Ref 3).
16. Dr. SHULKIN thanked Dr. TERAUCHI for his report and asked about standardizing his assessment methods. Dr. KIM and Dr. NERETIN also appreciated Dr. TERAUCHI's research and emphasized its significance.
17. After discussion, the meeting adopted the report on CEARAC activities for the 2016-2017 biennium.

#### **Agenda Item 6 Workplan and budget for CEARAC activities for the 2018-2019 biennium**

##### **6.1 Overall workplan and budget for CEARAC activities for the 2018-2019 biennium**

18. Mr. NAGASAKA presented the overall workplan and budget for CEARAC activities for the 2018-2019 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/5), which had

been revised following the resolutions of the 22<sup>nd</sup> NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/Ref 7).

19. Dr. Joji ISHIZAKA, FP of Japan, mentioned the upcoming meeting of Conference on Scientific Committee on Ocean Research (SCOR) planned in Toyama in 2019 and suggested CEARAC should take advantage of this event to advertise activities of NOWPAP.

20. The meeting adopted the workplan and budget.

## **6.2 Workplan and budget for specific projects**

### **6.2.1 Development of the CEARAC Medium-term Strategy on marine biodiversity**

21. Dr. YOSHIDA presented the workplan and budget on development of the CEARAC Medium-term Strategy on marine biodiversity (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/6)

22. Dr. SHULKIN suggested that the wording of “Marine Biodiversity” should be changed to “Marine Biodiversity Conversation” to better reflect the specific area of activity. Dr. ISHIZAKA agreed with the suggestion.

23. Dr. NERETIN suggested adding the word “habitat” in the table in the workplan document beside species that are threatened.

24. After a long discussion, the meeting agreed to narrow down the proposed activities in Table 1. The revised table will be circulated among the FPs within 2 weeks after the meeting for adoption.

### **6.2.2 Development of a roadmap for Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation**

25. Dr. YOSHIDA presented the workplan and budget on development of a roadmap for Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/7).

26. Dr. NERETIN made a separate presentation with the RCU proposal on the way forward in the development of the Regional Action Plan (presentation is available on request). He emphasized that development of CEARAC medium-term strategy on biodiversity is closely connected with the development of the Regional Action

Plan. While presenting about the experiences of other Regional Seas Organizations, RCU suggested that as a foundational activity, CEARAC produces NOWPAP List of “Red List” of Species and Habitats that would become the basis for developing activities under the Regional Plan. While he noted that NOWPAP Red List of Species will be compiled by DINRAC as a third phase of Red List of Species Project, CEARAC would still need to review overall criteria for the NOWPAP List (some of which may be the same as for DINRAC Red List of Species Project and criteria for identifying habitats would need to be discussed separately). He recommended that this foundational work, development of criteria and compilation of the NOWPAP List of Species and Habitats could become major CEARAC activity for 2018-2019 as a part of the development of CEARAC MTS for marine biodiversity.

27. In his presentation he also proposed to consider several ongoing biodiversity-related activities of other RACs that would assist in the development of Regional Action Plan. He emphasized the importance of cooperation in the development of the NOWPAP List with relevant regional and global organizations. Finally, Mr. Neretin proposed that CEARAC activity on the Regional Action Plan should be discussed at the upcoming RAC FPMs (DINRAC, POMRAC and MERRAC) to ensure ownership by RACs.
28. Dr. YAGI expressed confusion that the Secretariat and RCU presented two different plans and wondered whether the CEARAC FPs need to decide what plans to accept. Dr. SHULKIN expressed similar concerns that it's difficult to comment and decide on this now. He was also confused about RCU's suggestion of developing new criteria for Red List. Dr. YOSHIDA, Dr. Fen YAN of DINRAC, and Ms. TSUKASAKI all voiced their confusion about the different plans.
29. Then Dr. YAGI suggested accepting CEARAC's plan while being mindful of cooperation with other organizations. The Chairperson requested that RCU should have submitted their suggestions in a form of working document to the Secretariat of CEARAC in advance for CEARAC FPs to become familiar with the ideas. Mr. Young Jae IM, Alternate of Korea, also advised that RCU should have a close consultation with the Secretariat of CEARAC prior to the meeting to make clear what should be discussion foci under each agenda item.
30. The meeting agreed that the Secretariat of CEARAC will explain this activity to other RACs' FPs in correspondence/at respective RAC meetings and ask for their

opinions on how to collaborate with this activity.

31. RCU and all RACs had an extended discussion on the specifics of the workplan and budget including timetable and potential budget modifications. The meeting suggested accepting this workplan in principle with the condition of refining proposed workplan based on the decisions at RAC FPMs.
32. Besides, the Secretariat clarified that this is only a roadmap for Regional Action Plan (RAP), not the Plan itself, and the Secretariat is only asking to accept this broad roadmap to eventually reach the goal of making a final Plan at the end. Dr. SHULKIN expressed that it's difficult for RACs to accept this roadmap as it lacks clear output.
33. The meeting adopted the workplan and budget in principle pending possible later modifications. However, the meeting agreed to add the possibility of workplan and budget modification in the proposed workplan as: The meeting added a note to the budget regarding the possibility of budget modification depending on the adoption of this agenda by RAC FPMs.

### **6.2.3 Development of a tool for mapping seagrass distribution in the NOWPAP region**

34. Dr. TERAUCHI presented a workplan and budget on seagrass distribution to be implemented in the 2018-2019 biennium: Development of a tool for mapping seagrass distribution in the NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/8).
35. The meeting adopted the workplan and budget.

### **Agenda Item 7 Report on CEARAC marine litter activities**

36. The Secretariat of CEARAC reported the result of its marine litter activities for the 2016-2017 biennium and presented the workplan and budget for the 2018-2019 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/9).
37. Dr. YOSHIDA also noted that CEARAC Japan started translating the Node from English to Japanese to make it more available for people in Japan. Dr. LIU

encouraged all RACs to translate regional node contents into languages of the NOWPAP member states.

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

38. Dr. Tatyana ORLOVA, as a representative of Russia on NOWPAP Special Project, introduced the project idea titled "Identification of key indicator species and ecosystems of biodiversity change in the NOWPAP region" (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 16/Ref 6, page 24). Dr. LIU noted that the last IGM already approved \$100,000 for two special projects and \$50,000 could be used as a seed funding for this project.
39. Dr. Teruhisa KOMATSU from IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) reported on the activities of his organization and expected collaboration between Ocean Remote Sensing Project for Coastal Habitat Mapping of IOC/WESTPAC and CEARAC activity on mapping seagrass.
40. Ms. Nobuko KAJIURA from United Nations ESCAP, East and North-East Asia Office (NEASPEC) Secretariat reported on the project of North-East Asian Marine Protected Area Network (NEAMPAN) and suggested further collaboration with NOWPAP. Dr. LIU noted the importance of CEARAC working together with NEASPEC.
41. Dr. Toyomitsu HORII from North Pacific marine Science Organization (PICES) reported on the activities of his organization. Dr. ISHIZAKA added, as a member of a Co-Chair of Advisory Panel for CREAMS/PICES Program in East Asian Marginal Seas of PICES, and suggested involvement of CEARAC in preparation of the North Pacific ecosystem status report 3.
42. Dr. Sangjin LEE from UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME) Phase II reported on the activities of his organization. Dr. YOSHIDA thanked for Dr. LEE's report and asked whether YSLME has already decided on the list of habitats in their research at these could be used by CEARAC. Dr. LEE replied that relevant research is being implemented by expert of two countries and expected continuous collaboration.

43. Dr. Yoshihisa SHIRAYAMA as DINRAC FP reported on the activities of DINRAC on evaluation of the Red List in the NOWPAP region.

**Agenda Item 9 Arrangement of the 17<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP CEARAC FPM**

44. The Director of CEARAC proposed to hold the 17<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting in fall 2019 in Toyama, Japan, and the meeting agreed on the proposal.

**Agenda Item 10 Other matters**

45. The meeting was invited to raise any other issues relevant to CEARAC activities.
46. Dr. YOSHIDA reported on the special project conducted by the MOE of Japan.

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

47. A draft report of the 16<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**

48. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the sixteenth NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting was closed by the chairperson at 13:18 on 11 May 2018.