

## **Implementation of NOWPAP activities since the 14<sup>th</sup> CEARAC Focal Points Meeting**

### **Report of NOWPAP Regional Coordinating Unit**

1. This report on the implementation of NOWPAP activities covers the period since the 14<sup>th</sup> CEARAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM) held on 7-8 Apr 2016 in Toyama until 25 July 2017.
2. More details of CEARAC activities will be presented by the CEARAC Director under separate agenda item. The brief information on activities of all NOWPAP RACs is given below, highlighting both achievements and challenges which these RACs are facing.

#### **1. CEARAC - Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment**

##### **Regional Activity Centre**

3. At the 14th CEARAC FPM held in Toyama in April 2016, the implementation plans of two activities approved by the 20th IGM were discussed in detail. The meeting agreed to modify the title of the first activity to "Assessment of major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region".
4. The three projects approved for the 2014-2015 biennium by the 18th NOWPAP IGM are to be completed in 2017: Pilot assessment of the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity in selected areas of the NOWPAP region will be published in August 2017. Case studies of seagrass and seaweed mapping in selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region using remote sensing will be published by the end of 2017. Interactive map of eutrophic zones was ready in early 2017.
5. CEARAC's work on eutrophication will support NOWPAP member states in future reporting requirements for Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and specifically the proposed Indicator 14.1.1: Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density.
6. The 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM has approved two CEARAC projects for the 2016-2017 biennium which will be built upon the results achieved during the 2014-2015 biennium:
  - Development of a draft common procedure for assessment of the impacts of major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region.
  - Feasibility study towards assessment of seagrass distribution in the NOWPAP region.
7. In 2017 CEARAC continued building partnerships and exchanging information with other NOWPAP RACs and relevant regional and global partners, including the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans, POGO, Google Earth and others.

#### **2. DINRAC - Data and Information Network Regional Activity Centre**

8. DINRAC continues to maintain the following databases (available at the DINRAC website):

- Database on major environmental data.
  - Database on NOWPAP Coastal and Marine Environmental Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS) Applications.
  - Database on Marine Litter.
  - Database on Coastal and Marine Nature Reserves.
  - Database on NOWPAP Publications.
  - Databases on NOWPAP Institutions and Experts.
9. DINRAC has made progress in the following activities for the 2016-2017 biennium which were approved by the 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM:
- The new DINRAC website and web GIS System were launched in April 2016. However, the work on new website is still ongoing.
  - Major environmental data (continued from 2014-2015) were collected from all NOWPAP member states in 2016 and 2017.
  - The information on endangered/threatened species in the NOWPAP region (second phase, with expanded geographical coverage) has been collected and will be uploaded to the DINRAC website soon.
  - Marine environmental standards used in NOWPAP member states have been submitted by China, Japan and Russia.
10. In addition, the 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM has requested DINRAC to ensure financial transactions for two NOWPAP activities where all NOWPAP RACs will be involved, to be overseen by POMRAC:
- Development of Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs), targets and indicators.
  - Training course on integrated coastal and river basin management (ICARM).
- The cooperation has gone well.
11. The 15<sup>th</sup> DINRAC FPM, which was held in Beijing on 25-26 May 2017, discussed DINRAC's work plan and budget for 2018-2019 biennium, and three project proposals including that on Sea Reclamation State and Management. The meeting has also discussed in which fields DINRAC could take the lead or participate under the umbrella of NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023. The participants have also discussed the challenges DINRAC facing and possible approaches.

### **3. MERRAC - Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre**

12. MERRAC has made progress in the following activities for the 2016-2017 biennium which were approved the 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM:
- The 18th NOWPAP BRAVO led by Japan was organized on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016. It was confirmed that the member countries and MERRAC Secretariat is ready even though the accident happened out of working hours. The member countries and MERRAC Secretariat confirmed that the on-line system could work well. Some member countries proposed to have a longer exercise.
  - The full-scale NOWPAP DELTA exercise was successfully organized in Weihai, China

by China Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) and Korea Coast Guard (KCG) on 14 July 2016. Experts from Japan and Russia also took part in the exercise as observers. In total, 19 vessels, one helicopter, two unmanned aerial vehicles and about 400 people were mobilized by MSA and KCG.

- Development of MERRAC information system based on Web GIS is ongoing.
- Development of information sharing platform on oil and HNS spills in the NOWPAP region is ongoing.
- Oiled wildlife response is ongoing.

Other ongoing activities include the establishment of oil sample exchange procedure for transboundary marine pollution, and review and analysis of existing prediction models for floating marine litter. New format for databases on oil and HNS experts and equipment will be used routinely by MERRAC Secretariat (with periodic updates when necessary). The new online pollution reporting system will be tested during the 2016-2017 biennium.

13. The 20th NOWPAP MERRAC Focal Points Meeting and 12th Competent National Authorities Meeting was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 10-13 April 2017. The meeting reviewed the progress of MERRAC activities made during the intersessional period and discussed various technical issues including MERRAC future activities regarding oil and HNS marine pollution preparedness and response, implementation of the NOWPAP Regional Oil and HNS Spill Contingency Plan, and MERRAC workplan and budget for 2018/2019 biennium under the NOWPAP MTS for 2018-2019.

#### **4. POMRAC – Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre**

14. In 2015, most of POMRAC activities were “frozen” due to problems with processing payments to foreign experts from Russia. The 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM has decided to allocate part of POMRAC budget for the 2016-2017 biennium to DINRAC in order to implement the following two activities to be overseen by POMRAC:
  - Development of ecological quality objectives (EcoQOs), targets and indicators for the NOWPAP region (with a regional workshop);
  - Training course on Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management (ICARM).
15. These activities have been actually started in 2014-2015, so some information was collected and one regional workshop on EcoQOs was held in 2014 with the participation of other RACs and NOWPAP partners (PICES, PEMSEA, YSLME and OSPAR).
16. At the 13<sup>th</sup> POMRAC FPM held in Vladivostok in May 2016, the implementation plans of new activities approved by the 20th IGM were discussed in detail and agreed upon.
17. At the regional workshop held back-to-back with the FPM in Vladivostok, experts from NOWPAP member states and representatives from NOWPAP partners in the region (PICES and IOC WESTPAC) discussed targets and indicators for the EcoQOs formulated earlier, in 2014, related to five major issues: biodiversity and habitats, alien species, eutrophication, contaminants, and marine litter. Experts found with satisfaction that at least several targets related to biodiversity, eutrophication and contaminants might be common for all four NOWPAP member states. Following preparation of national inputs and submissions from all NOWPAP Regional Activity Centers, the regional overview on EcoQO targets and indicators for the NOWPAP region will be prepared by the end of 2017.

#### **5. Coordination of RAC activities**

18. In line with NOWPAP IGM decisions, NOWPAP RCU continued its efforts on coordinating RAC activities through bilateral meetings with some RACs, meetings during RAC FPMs, using Webex and telephone for frequent communication (in addition to e-mail communication).
19. Guidance was provided in organizing RAC Focal Points Meetings (FPMs). Comments on RACs FPMs documents and meeting reports as well as RAC project proposals for 2016-2017 were provided by the RCU.
20. Assistance was provided to RACs in preparing and finalizing their expenditure reports and progress reports before submitting these to UNEP HQs.
21. RCU provided help and assistance to RACs with ongoing projects, including identifying appropriate experts.
22. Information on meetings of interest to RACs (e.g., UNEP Regional Seas, NEASPEC, PEMSEA, PICES and WESTPAC meetings) as well as outcomes of RCU staff members' missions were shared with RACs which helped to enhance partnerships and to avoid possible duplication.

## **6. Other NOWPAP activities**

23. In addition to specific projects carried out by NOWPAP RACs, several activities were implemented and coordinated by the RCU as described in the following sections.

### **6.1 Building partnerships**

24. NOWPAP RCU and RACs staff continued developing and maintaining partnerships with the following relevant organizations, programmes and projects in the region (in alphabetical order):
  - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
  - Global Programme of Action (GPA) for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities;
  - International Environmental Technology Center (IETC) of UNEP;
  - North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Corporation (NEASPEC);
  - North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES);
  - Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA);
  - UNESCO/IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC).
  - The 2nd Phase of Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Project (YSLME)
25. Serving as a non-country member to the PEMSEA partnership council, NOWPAP has contributed to the implementation of its Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia. In 2016, NOWPAP has presented a proposal at the East Asian Seas Partnership Council meeting to have a joint PEMSEA-NOWPAP training course on integrated coastal management in 2017. The course is scheduled to be held in November 2017 in the Philippines.
26. NOWPAP has maintained regular contact with the Secretariat of the CBD exchanging information, nominating and sponsoring experts for CBD workshops on different issues (including CBD SOI meeting in September 2016 in Seoul).

### **6.2 Raising public awareness**

27. In accordance with the NOWPAP Public Awareness Strategy, the following actions were taken by NOWPAP RCU and RACs:
- The NOWPAP homepage and RAC homepages have been maintained and constantly updated. News and information have been posted on the NOWPAP homepage since 2006.
  - An electronic Newsletter (NOWPAP Quarterly) has been distributed by NOWPAP RCU through e-mail to member states and partners (since 2008).
  - News about NOWPAP implementation were regularly posted at the partners' websites and introduced in their electronic newsletter (e.g., COBSEA, IETC and PEMSEA).
  - Information about NOWPAP activities was introduced to UNEP Headquarters, UNEP ROAP and GPA websites and contributed to the quarterly UNEP DEPI Dispatch.
  - Several brochures, leaflets, posters about NOWPAP activities were prepared and widely distributed. In addition to English, national languages were used where appropriate.
  - RACs and RCU staff also contributed articles to newsletters and delivered lectures/presentations at a local level.
  - NOWPAP activities were introduced at the G7 Environment Ministers Meeting and the Northeast Asia Regional Environmental Forum in Toyama.
28. While attending a few global and regional meetings (e.g., annual Global Meeting of Regional Seas, PICES Annual Meeting, EAS Partnership Council Meeting, YSLME meeting, etc.) as well as local events, RACs and RCU staff members contributed to increasing NOWPAP visibility and attracting public attention to marine environment conservation by introducing the NOWPAP activities.
29. NOWPAP RCU also continued to maintain close relationships with civil society including Japan Environment Action Network (JEAN), Our Sea of East Asia Network (OSEAN), Ocean Conservancy (OC) and Shanghai Rendu. NOWPAP joined JEAN and other experts at the Marine Litter Symposium organized in Tokyo in January 2016 by the Ministry of Environment of Japan.

### **6.3 Resource mobilization and financial support from members**

30. At the recent NOWPAP IGMs, member states agreed to reduce the number of UNEP RCU staff members from six to four and to downgrade the levels of some RCU posts. As a result, some RCU staff members felt insecure and three persons left the RCU in July-August 2014.
31. As two staff members who left in 2014 were responsible (among other things) for resource mobilization and project development, no new project proposals were developed.
32. In spite of the limited capacity of the RCU (due to decreased number of staff), some steps to mobilize external resources were taken and limited external funds were mobilized by the RCU for CEARAC project to enhance regional node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML). Information about opportunities to obtain external funding from other sources has been also shared by the RCU with RACs. However, resource mobilization requires the participation of all stakeholders but unfortunately NOWPAP RACs have so far shown insufficient interest. In this context, resource mobilization was extremely challenging for the RCU during the period of its restructuring, with very limited human resources in both, Toyama and Busan offices.

#### **6.4 NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI)**

33. NOWPAP member states have continued their efforts in organizing and supporting activities against marine litter such as ICC (International Coastal Cleanup) campaigns, central government support to local governments to deal with marine litter (Japan) and the second Comprehensive Marine Litter Management Plan (Korea).
34. Sponsored by the Chinese government, Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and NOWPAP Trust Fund, the 2015 NOWPAP ICC campaign and marine litter management workshop (organized together with Marine Litter Focal Points of TEMM – Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among China, Japan and Korea) were successfully held in Yantai, China, and the Republic of Korea, in September 2015.
35. In September 2016, NOWPAP ICC and workshop on marine litter management (again, organized together with TEMM) was held in Slavyanka (near Vladivostok, Russia), with the support from the local government. The workshop focused on marine litter monitoring (towards better management of marine litter), international cooperation, and best practices applied by NGOs as well as central and local government to address marine litter issues.
36. The 2017 ICC will be held in Toyama on 19-20 September 2017 together with TEMM.
37. Host organization of CEARAC, Northwest Pacific Region Environmental Cooperation Center (NPEC), together with NOWPAP RCU, continued to maintain and enrich the Northwest Pacific Regional Node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML): ([http://www.npec.or.jp/NWPacific\\_node/index.html](http://www.npec.or.jp/NWPacific_node/index.html)), the only operational regional node of the UNEP-led GPML so far.
38. DINRAC has continuously updated marine litter database with monitoring results provided by the NPEC (Northwest Pacific Region Environmental Cooperation Center, Japan) and MOF (Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Korea) as well as ICC results from China and Russia. All national marine litter monitoring data and related information, including the data from the SOA (State Oceanic Administration) of China, are available at the DINRAC website (<http://dinrac.nowpap.org>).
39. MERRAC has finalized the project on floating marine litter distribution and impacts in the NOWPAP region and the report is in the process of final review. Upon approval of the 20<sup>th</sup> IGM, the new project on 'review and analysis of existing floating marine litter prediction models in the NOWPAP region' has also been implemented in parallel.

#### **7. NOWPAP Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU)**

40. As the NOWPAP RCU-hosting countries (Japan and Korea) have faced difficulties with providing adequate financial support to meet the increasing staffing costs of the two RCU offices, NOWPAP member states discussed possible measures to address this issue starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> IGM (held in 2012) as well as at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary IGMs (in 2014 and 2015, respectively), focusing on restructuring of the RCU.
41. The member states decided at the 1<sup>st</sup> Extraordinary IGM to reduce the total number of RCU staff members of the UNEP to a maximum of four (from previous six) and to reduce the level of some posts. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary IGM the staffing of two RCU offices was agreed to be established at one P5 and one G6 post in Toyama office as well as one P3 and one G4 post in Busan office.
42. The targeted date to complete staffing of the two RCU offices agreed by the NOWPAP member states was February 2016. However, the recruitment process took longer than

expected (between 3 and 6 months) to assure compliance with UN rules and regulations (including 2 months grace period since the selection completed for the UN staff re-assigned to a new duty station – for the recruited P3 and P-5 staff). New G4 staff member in Busan office has started working in May 2016, new G6 staff member – in July 2016, new P3 and P5 staff members – in August and September 2016, respectively.

#### **8. Brief summary of discussions the 21<sup>st</sup> NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) relevant for the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of MERRAC Focal Points**

43. The 21<sup>st</sup> NOWPAP IGM, the meeting was held on 23-24 November 2016 in Seoul, R. Korea.
44. The meeting was attended by representatives of the NOWPAP Member States, namely the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as China, Japan, Korea and Russia). Directors of the NOWPAP RACs, two representatives of UNEP Headquarters and RCU staff members also attended the meeting. Representatives of the North Pacific Science Organization (PICES), Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Project (YSLME), North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), attended the meeting as observers.
45. The Meeting agenda included discussions of the UNEP Executive Director Report on the implementation of NOWPAP, reports of NOWPAP RACs, discussion on the draft NOWPAP Mid-term Strategy (2018-2023) and other issues.
46. The RAC directors reported on the status of implementation of their Programme of Work, including organization of Focal Points Meetings, specific projects, RAP MALI activities, cooperation and coordination among RACs and with the RCU, website updates as well as other routine tasks and plans.
47. Commenting on the RACs reports, Japan requested the established by DINRAC databases should reflect user needs in relevant agencies of member states. Russia emphasized the importance of CEARAC activities. Methods for monitoring of the marine environment and coastal area are important to assess the environmental status and provide baseline information for other NOWPAP RACs. Seagrass assessment is particularly important in this regard. Russia thanked DINRAC for administrative support provided to POMRAC during the biennium 2016-2017. Russia considered DINRAC activities successful and proposed to adopt their report. China raised concerns about the potential overlap between CEARAC activities on marine litter and the work of other centres and suggested better integration with the RAP MALI activities. It also suggested that focal points from relevant ministries who are responsible for policy making should be invited to provide inputs to CEARAC activities. CEARAC responded that CEARAC worked with national focal points on marine litter of member states in the past. For example, the International Coastal Clean-up (ICC) in Slavyanka, Russia in September 2016, was attended by national points for marine litter. CEARAC's activities on marine litter have been conducted under the coordination of RCU. Korea requested clarification from DINRAC on the delay in signing MOU with experts affecting implementation negatively. DINRAC responded that it intends to speed up the process of expert recruitment. DINRAC already collected environmental quality data, data on endangered species - phase II, and information on regulations and environmental standards. By the end of the year, the signing of MOU and collection process will be accelerated. China commended MERRAC for its work on oil spill preparedness and on sea-based sources of marine litter but raised some questions on how to account for litter originating from sources in the agriculture and aquaculture sectors. China also noted the importance of developing activities addressing marine litter prevention and working with

local communities. MERRAC responded it is important to know the sources of sea-based marine litter and its regional transfer. MERRAC formed an expert group to address knowledge gaps related to sea-based marine litter and will develop recommendations for member states in 2017.

48. Korea Coast Guard congratulated MERRAC on its achievements and welcomed enhanced regional cooperation through the implementation of MERRAC activities. Korea Coast Guard is planning to hold the 27<sup>th</sup> Expert Meeting in conjunction with trans Hebei's Bay oil spill incident symposium, and welcomed marine pollution related agencies to attend the symposium to share experiences. Korea Coast Guard operates an online pollution reporting system and requested MERRAC to utilize the system during BRAVO communication exercise, starting from the upcoming 18<sup>th</sup> BRAVO exercise which will be led by Japan Coast Guard in December 2016. Finally, Korea emphasized the importance of further developing procedures for international oil sample exchange among NOWPAP member states.
49. Responding to MERRAC report, Russia expressed an interest to expand the scope of the existing oil and NHS spill contingency plan to include oil spills from off-shore installations connected with oil and gas exploration and production on the continental shelf. This issue was discussed during the last MERRAC FPM but no progress was achieved. Russia supports the principle of zero discharge for offshore oil and gas platforms. Russia expressed its continuing support for the activities of POMRAC, especially the preparation of NOWPAP marine environmental status report and development of marine environmental quality Objectives (EQOs).
50. MERRAC Director confirmed that NOWPAP member states did not reach an agreement yet on whether to consider oil spills from off-shore installations in the Regional Plan and continue debating the issue. The 20<sup>th</sup> IGM requested MERRAC to start developing recommendations on how to respond to oil contaminated wildlife and then move to the feasibility assessment for including off-shore platform issue in the Regional Plan as a MERRAC project for the next biennium 2018-2019. The next MERRAC FMP in 2017 is planning to consider this issue among others.
51. The NOWPAP Senior Coordinator updated member states on the status of implementation of the NOWPAP Programme of Work in 2016-2017. He pointed out that 59% of planned work is completed, 32% of activities are delayed, and 9% were not yet started.
52. Korea requested further details on the project related to the assessment of climate change impacts in the NOWPAP region. NOWPAP Coordinator responded that over the last three to four years, RCU consulted with experts and organizations, but no tangible result was achieved. The project should have started in 2016, but there was limited technical capacity in the RCU to implement this activity because of the continuing restructuring. He proposed for RCU to undertake rapid assessment of issues and institutions addressing climate change impacts on NOWPAP environment if member states could provide limited additional resources to support this activity. Given other priorities, it is very difficult for RCU to secure external funding.
53. China commented that during initial consultation of the NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023, China objected to include climate change issues in the MTS. China supported RCU's intention to seek external funds for rapid assessment of institutions, projects, and issues related to climate change impacts and proposed RCU to report results of this assessment at the next IGM meeting for further decision. Japan commented that its government is fully aware of the importance of climate change impacts on the marine and coastal areas. Japan emphasized that the issue is not a matter of securing additional financing but of limited

capacity of member states in this area. For example, climate change issues were not included into the MERRAC work plan for 2016-2017. Some background efforts should be undertaken to assure that member states are ready to implement the project on climate change impacts and have sufficient capacity and resources. Russia commented the proposed decision “i. RAC Directors to accelerate completion of the delayed activities and report progress to the next NOWPAP IGM;” and suggested to add “in consultation with RCU”, because RACs could not do it without the help of RCU, and also change “accelerate” into “complete”. As for climate change, member states can support the global activity from the regional point of view and regional efforts in connection with marine environment, and political obligations and commitments of the countries in the framework of Paris climate change agreement.

54. Japan reported about its work on marine litter. G7 Summit was held in Japan in 2016 and marine litter issues were discussed at the meeting. The leaders committed to promote the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) approach when it applies to marine litter. The G7 Environmental Ministers meeting, held in Toyama, re-affirmed the decision of G7 Summit on combating marine litter. Five priorities were identified there: (i) environmentally sound waste management; (ii) reduction of marine litter, including collection and removal to prevent micro-plastic pollution, (iii) promotion of international cooperation with international organizations such as UNEP, IMO and FAO, (iv) support for outreach activities, and (v) standardizing and harmonizing marine litter monitoring methodologies. Following the decisions of the meeting, Japan has already taken actions to address the above priorities. Japan has held the APEC high level meeting in Tokyo in September 2016 that addressed financing for waste management systems in the Asia Pacific region. Japan also takes a lead in supporting efforts in standardizing and harmonising marine litter monitoring methodologies and will hold an expert meeting on the harmonization of methodologies for micro-plastics monitoring in December 2016. Japan also supports Tripartite Environmental Ministers Meetings, the last one held on 18 April 2016. Member states decided to organize a workshop on marine litter. Japan, China and Russia have conducted joint research on marine litter in July and August 2016. China and Japan organized a senior officers meeting to address marine litter issues. Both parties established a dialogue platform of experts to address marine litter and will continue conducting research on marine litter in 2017 and beyond.
55. China reported that China Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) participated in the regional cooperation for the preparedness and response to marine oil spills under the framework of NOWPAP. China has attended related meetings and exchanged information. MSA attended MERRAC organized communication exercise, and exchanged information with other member states. China is willing to strengthen regional cooperation on oil spills response framework of the NOWPAP. This year the exercise was conducted at Weihai, Shandong Province, led by Korea and China. China intends to continue supporting these training exercises in the framework of NOWPAP.
56. Recently Russia adopted several Federal laws on waste management and best available technologies and best environmental practices. In 2016 Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology focuses on the implementation of these laws. The Ballast Water Convention comes into force in September 2017. Russia is a Party to the Convention and accelerated preparatory steps to be ready for the implementation. The next year is the Year of Ecology in the Russian Federation. A lot of events and activities are being prepared. Russia emphasizes close cooperation with all NOWPAP member states and continues reflecting NOWPAP vision in its bilateral cooperation activities.
57. Korea introduced country's efforts combating marine litter. Korea has attended the NOWPAP TEMM Joint Workshop on marine litter management held in Slavyanka, Russia

in September 2016. Korea informed about its policies addressing marine litter and engaged in discussions with stakeholders at that meeting. Korea is also implementing the Second Action Plan for marine litter. Policy direction has shifted from collection-oriented to management oriented. In order to strengthen regional cooperation concerning marine litter, Korea is going to organize a training workshop on marine litter in Yeosu, Korea, in March 2017. The training is sponsored by APEC. Korea invited member states to join this training program.

58. PICES provided overview of PICES, its functions, and presented PICES-NOWPAP Framework for Scientific Cooperation in the North Pacific Ocean, and informed the meeting about PICES' upcoming events. PICES is willing to organize a joint workshop with NOWPAP on how to translate scientific knowledge into policy and could provide facilities free of charge.
59. ESCAP representative briefed participants on the Northeast Asia Marine Protected Area Network, and stressed that NOWPAP is an important partner for the network. The network holds annual workshops with the participation of marine protected area managers. ESCAP looks forward to continue cooperating with the NOWPAP and YSLME to complement activities of each other and avoid duplication.
60. The representative of Yellow Sea LME project introduced its objectives and outcomes. He highlighted that considering good collaboration during the first phase of YSLME project and overlapping geographical coverage, YSLME considers NOWPAP as an essential partner of the YSLME SAP implementation. YSLME looks forward to a continued collaboration with NOWPAP in the implementation of the YSLME SAP and discussion of the draft NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023.
61. The representative of PEMSEA stated that PEMSEA and NOWPAP have a long history of partnership. NOWPAP is PEMSEA Non-Country Partner since 2007 and the two organizations have engaged in a number of joint activities in the past. Under the NOWPAP's new leadership, PEMSEA looks forward to a stronger and more active collaboration between the two organizations.
62. Preceding the discussion of the draft NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023, UNEP representative described major priorities for its Regional Seas programme and how they are linked to the work of NOWPAP. Among them are the necessity to reach out to non-environmental ministries responsible for development agenda, adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the importance of linkages between security, energy and food, and multiple opportunities for development of blue economies. UNEP introduced the global role played by the Regional Seas Programme, its work on land-based sources of pollution, 2017 campaign on marine litter and partnership on coral reefs. There are 576 agreements worldwide related to oceans; ocean governance frameworks have to be strengthened and oceans agenda become more visible and relevant in the development agenda. UNEP emphasized the importance of building bridges with relevant international stakeholders such as FAO (on fisheries), UNDP, ILO, UNESCO (on science), and with IMO (on shipping) to strengthen regional cooperation. The cooperation between regional seas and fisheries management bodies is moving ahead as manifested by the first ever global meeting of Regional Seas and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) held in Seoul in September 2016. Pollution is also a critical issue for member states to tackle. With regard to regional seas and SDGs, there are indicators and targets in the global framework that should be taken in account and harmonized with specific indicators used by Regional Seas. In February 2017 UNEP will launch a global campaign on marine litter and engage Regional Seas. Marine litter campaign will also be conducted in China. There is need to address marine pollution at the source. The GPA partnership needs to be revitalized. UNEP

also informed participants about forthcoming global meetings on oceans, including UN SDG 14 Conference, EU-UNEP high-level meeting in December 2016, the 4th Review Meeting of the GPA in 2017, and the meeting of Regional Seas, LME, and RFMOs in December 2016. Concluding, UNEP emphasized that Regional Seas play an important role in the global ocean governance and are important institutional mechanism to support cooperation at multiple levels between and within member states and other stakeholders such as private sector.

63. NOWPAP Senior Coordinator introduced the background and elements of the NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023 and its core themes, monitoring and evaluation and future steps to finalize the strategy.
64. Japan made initial comments and thanked UNEP and RCU for preparing the background information on the MTS, presenting a global picture, and providing detailed explanation and ideas behind the proposed strategy. Japan shared its basic understanding about NOWPAP. NOWPAP is a framework of regional cooperation and it is an action plan. It is not a separate organization. There is no dedicated staff to do implementation except for the RCU staffed by UNEP, thus capacity is limited. MTS is the tool to define the future direction of the NOWPAP and because of the limited resources the issues to be taken by NOWPAP have to be prioritized. The purpose of the MTS is to set the direction and priorities. NOWPAP needs to avoid duplication with activities of other organizations. Future MTS should be aligned with the SDG 14 and relevant resolutions of UNEA. At the same time, MTS should address most urgent and emerging issues relevant to this particular region. The current draft MTS identified major environmental issues, and is very comprehensive. Japan supports the MTS overarching goal of building ecosystem resilience which is in line with the overall NOWPAP goals. Regarding MTS core themes, sustainable production and consumption (SCP) in the region is addressed by other stakeholders. NOWPAP can go upstream to address the issue on marine litter to some extent but not too far. With its limited resources, there is need to consider what could specifically be done to get tangible results. One could reach out to financial, economic bodies, institutions and private companies NOWPAP is not working with currently. Further discussion is warranted on the NOWPAP effectiveness issues described in the draft MTS document. With regard to mobilization of resources, Japan cannot accept any increase in the trust fund resources at this stage. RCU should focus on the effective utilization of the existing surplus and then look for external resources to implement NOWPAP Programme of Work.
65. China expressed the appreciation to UNEP for providing the global overview and to RCU for delivering the comprehensive presentation. China also raised concerns about the practicalities of the proposed MTS implementation. The MTS should take into account global context, member states' concerns, availability of human and financial resources, and necessary capacity building. The contents of the MTS need to be discussed, such as prevention and reduction of land based pollution, conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity. China also asked for more time to consult internally on the content of the proposed MTS and asked for clarification about the difference between strategy and action plan.
66. Korea largely supported opinions expressed by Japan and China. It added that the MTS should consider projects conducted by other organizations. For example, Korea, Japan and China already participate in the PEMSEA's integrated coastal river basin management activities.
67. Russia thanked UNEP and RCU for the background information and detailed presentation. Russia pointed out that there is a need for in-depth national-level discussion of the MTS. Russia emphasized that the proposed document should still be called MTS and not an

action plan not to confuse it with the NOWPAP terminology. Russia noted that the MTS should be internally-consistent, practical and realistic. Proposed activities should be prioritized as short-term and longer-term activities.

68. Comments from NOWPAP RACs largely supported observations made by member states.
69. IGM Chairperson summarized the discussion by noting that the MTS should compose of the three building blocks: one is the regional strategy including themes and core themes; the second one is the expected outcomes and what projects the member states should pursue to address the identified challenges, and the third block is a roadmap for implementation.
70. The 21<sup>st</sup> NOWPAP IGM adopted four resolutions as attached in the Annex 1. The meeting also discussed and took a note of the proposed Recommendations of the 21st NOWPAP IGM Chairperson attached as Annex 2 and agreed to include these recommendations in the records of the meeting for future consideration by member states.
71. The draft summary of the discussions presented above – as a part of the Report of the 21<sup>st</sup> NOWPAP IGM – are being reviewed by member states at the time of submission of this document. The approved Report will be available online on the NOWPAP website upon approval by all member states.

## **Annex 1: Resolutions of the 21<sup>st</sup> NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting**

### **Resolution 1**

#### **PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE 2016-2017 BIENNIUM**

*Acknowledging RACs and RCU efforts in implementing the NOWPAP 2016-2017 Programme of Work (PoW),*

*Recognizing the importance of joint efforts to protect the shared marine environment and manage sustainably its natural resources by engaging neighboring countries in comprehensive and specific regional actions contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and targets,*

*Taking note that more than half of planned activities included in the 2016-2017 NOWPAP PoW were implemented on time,*

#### The Twenty first Intergovernmental Meeting.

1. Approves the Report of the UNEP Executive Director (UNEP/NOWPAP IG. 21/3), takes note of the NOWPAP implementation progress and the status of resources in the NOWPAP Trust Fund.
2. Approves the reports of NOWPAP four Regional Activity Centres – CEARAC, DINRAC, MERRAC, and POMRAC (UNEP/NOWPAP IG. 21/4/1-4) and acknowledges with satisfaction the progress made.
3. Having reviewed the Status of Implementation of NOWPAP PoW for 2016-2017 report (UNEP/NOWPAP IG. 21/5), requests:
  - a. RAC Directors supported by NOWPAP RCU to complete planned activities and report progress to the 22<sup>nd</sup> NOWPAP IGM;
  - b. NOWPAP RCU in co-operation with RACs, in 2017 organize stakeholder consultation meeting to map the existing projects and initiatives addressing climate change impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems in the NOWPAP region and report results to the Twenty-second NOWPAP IGM;
  - c. NOWPAP RCU and RACs to continue their best efforts to maintain and expand partnerships with relevant organizations, programmes and projects to support implementation of NOWPAP and report progress at each IGM;
  - d. NOWPAP RCU and RAC Directors with the support of member states enhance external resource mobilization for the implementation of NOWPAP Programme of Work and report progress at each IGM;
  - e. NOWPAP RCU and RAC Directors to enhance efforts in public communication and outreach aiming at the increased NOWPAP presence, relevance and visibility in the region and beyond, including in all four languages of the region;
  - f. Appreciates contributions of regional partners, including PICES, PEMSEA, YSLME and NEASPEC supporting implementation of NOWPAP Programme of

Work and requests NOWPAP RCU together with RAC Directors to include relevant joint activities in the NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023;

- g. Requests NOWPAP RCU to circulate the Terms of Reference for the restructured RCU by e-mail by January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017 for comments and approval at the 22<sup>nd</sup> NOWPAP IGM;
- h. Hold 22<sup>nd</sup> NOWPAP IGM in 2017 in Toyama, Japan.

## Resolution 2

### SUSTAINABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NOWPAP TRUST FUND AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

*Recognizing the necessity to increase the total amount of contributions of all member states to the NOWPAP Trust Fund to the target amount of US\$500,000 as agreed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> IGM,*

*Also recognizing with satisfaction the continuing and stable contributions to NOWPAP Trust Fund by member states in 2017,*

*Acknowledging the efforts of the Chinese delegation to reach the target amount of contribution to the NOWPAP Trust Fund of US\$125,000 annually in 2017,*

#### The Twenty first Intergovernmental Meeting,

1. Agrees to the contributions to the NOWPAP Trust Fund in 2017 as presented in Table 1.
2. NOWPAP RCU together with RAC Directors undertake utmost efforts to re-program existing resources and reach 100% expenditure rate of the NOWPAP Trust Fund by the end of 2016-2017 biennium;
3. Encourages the NOWPAP Member States, NOWPAP RCU and RACs to continue seeking additional funding to support NOWPAP activities.

**Table 1. Scale of contributions for 2017 Member States**

**Annual contribution (US\$)**

People's Republic of China	100,000
Japan	125,000
Republic of Korea	125,000
Russian Federation	125,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>475,000</b>

### Resolution 3

#### NOWPAP MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY 2018-2023

*Recognizing the need to develop the NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023 that is aligned with national and regional priorities and Sustainable Development Goals,*

*Having considered the draft Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023 (UNEP/NOWPAP IG. 21/6) and taking note of the Background Note for the 21<sup>st</sup> NOWPAP IGM (UNEP/NOWPAP IG. 21/INF/6),*

#### The Twenty first Intergovernmental Meeting,

1. Requests RCU with the support of RACs Directors and in consultation with member states and NOWPAP partners to finalize MTS 2018-2023 for the adoption by the 22<sup>nd</sup> NOWPAP IGM and to this effect decides:
  - a. NOWPAP RCU to submit the revised MTS 2018-2023 to member states by December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016;
  - b. Member states to provide comments and suggestions on the revised MTS 2018-2023 by March, 30<sup>th</sup> 2017,
  - c. NOWPAP RCU together with RACs Directors supported by NOWPAP Focal Points undertake consultations with NOWPAP member states, partner organizations, and relevant stakeholders on the proposed activities, initiatives and projects to be included in the MTS 2018-2023 implementation plan from December 2016 until October 2017;
  - d. RAC Directors supported by NOWPAP RCU to undertake consultations on the draft MTS 2018-2023 at the RAC FPMs in 2017.

## Resolution 4

### REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON MARINE LITTER

*Acknowledging the negative impacts of marine litter on the coastal and marine environment in the NOWPAP region,*

*Acknowledging also the efforts of NOWPAP member states to address marine litter problem to prevent harm to the coastal and marine environment,*

*Taking into account that the implementation of the NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine*

*Litter (RAP MALI) adopted in 2008 is in line with national and regional priorities identified by the NOWPAP member states,*

*Taking note that most of RAP MALI activities are expected to being implemented at the national and local level, in cooperation with local governments and relevant authorities as well as private sector, research institutions, NGOs and the general public,*

*Complimenting NOWPAP RCU for its efforts working with UNEP GPA office and other relevant organizations and initiatives to expand activities addressing marine litter and its sources,*

The Twenty first Intergovernmental Meeting,

1. Encourages NOWPAP member states to carry out activities to prevent, monitor and remove marine litter at a national and local level through the implementation of the NOWPAP RAP MALI,
2. Requests NOWPAP RACs and RCU to implement the NOWPAP RAP MALI work plan for 2016-2017 as scheduled in close consultation with UNEP GPA office and other international organizations, projects and programmes involved.

## **Annex 2: Recommendations of the Chairperson of the 21<sup>st</sup> NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting**

1. *Celebrating* with pride more than 20 years of the regional environmental cooperation established at the First Intergovernmental Meeting held in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 1994 which adopted the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region, and recognizing its important contribution to regional security, sustainable development and ecosystem-based management of the coastal and marine environment in the Northwest Pacific and shared commitments of the NOWPAP member states and its partners,
2. *Recalling* the overall goal of the UN Environment Regional Seas Programme, and the Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “The Future We Want” and the UN General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,
3. *Noting* Regional Seas Strategic Directions (2017-2020) adopted by the 17th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans held in Istanbul, Turkey on 20-22 October 2015,
4. *Recalling* the Paris Agreement on Climate Change adopted at the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Conference of Parties of UNFCCC in Paris, France on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015 that entered into force on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2016,
5. *Acknowledging* with great satisfaction the work of NOWPAP Regional Activity Centers in implementing NOWPAP activities,
6. *Mindful* of the continuing [increasing] degradation of the marine and coastal environment in the Northwest Pacific from both natural and human factors, as summarized in the State of the Marine Environment Report for the NOWPAP Region (SOMER 2),
7. *Welcoming* the efforts and measures taken by NOWPAP member states to strengthen and stabilize the NOWPAP institutional framework and enhance its activities responding to complex challenges to the Northwest Pacific environment with the renewed trust in the value and relevance of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan,
8. *Recognizing* with appreciation the valuable financial contributions by member states to the NOWPAP Trust Funds, and cash and in-kind contributions of other national, regional, and international organizations and stakeholders in the work and achievements of the NOWPAP,
9. **Renew** our commitment and step up efforts to address together the challenges related to environmental protection and sustainable development of the Northwest Pacific and its coasts, in the global framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
10. **Further implement** the NOWPAP at the regional, national and sub-national levels, with the application of the ecosystem approach as an overarching principle and in this context to finalize formulation of the Northwest Pacific Ecological Quality Objectives [and related targets] towards good environmental status of the Northwest Pacific,
11. **Adopt** the NOWPAP Mid-Term Strategy for 2018-2023 at the Twenty-Second Intergovernmental Meeting of the NOWPAP and start thereafter its implementation, as

the strategic framework for wise use, development and management of the coastal and marine environment of the Northwest Pacific [and marine environment of the Northwest Pacific region] and consistent with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

12. **Increase** the effectiveness, strengthen and where necessary expand the scope and accountability of activities of NOWPAP Regional Activity Centers by aligning their program of work with the NOWPAP Mid-Term Strategy for 2018-2023,
13. **Review** the feasibility and propose appropriate operational modality for the expansion of regional network of partners and institutions in support of NOWPAP activities aimed to reduce pressures on the marine and coastal environment in the context of sustainable development at the Twenty-Second Intergovernmental Meeting of NOWPAP,
14. **Apply** ecosystem approach to managing the marine and coastal environment in the region, including through enabling inter-sectoral cooperation in the integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning,
15. **Take** the necessary measures to progressively eliminate pollution reaching the Northwest Pacific region with a particular focus on marine litter as an emerging issue of regional and global concern and with the goal of achieving its significant reduction by 2023 in synergy with relevant initiatives at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels,
16. **Affirm** our commitment to increase the resilience of the Northwest Pacific marine and coastal socio-ecological systems to the impacts of climate change in collaboration with relevant institutions at the global, regional and national levels and include necessary measures in the NOWPAP Mid-Term Strategy for 2018-2023,
17. **Enhance** public outreach and awareness of NOWPAP activities at global, regional, national and sub-national levels. Develop NOWPAP Public Communication Strategy and Action Plan underpinned by available financial resources for the adoption by the Twenty second Intergovernmental Meeting of the NOWPAP.