

# IUCN's position on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity: Agenda Item 5.2

**Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP10),  
18-29 October, Nagoya, Japan**

## Summary of Recommendations:

IUCN calls on COP10 to urge Parties to:

- ✓ Adopt the recommendations of SBSTTA14 regarding the elaborated programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity, as detailed in UNEP/CBD/COP/10/3 section XIV/3.

Looking beyond COP10, IUCN urges Parties, other governments, relevant organisations, the Global Environmental Facility and other donors to:

- ✓ Support the full implementation of the programme of work as elaborated in UNEP/CBD/COP/10/3 section XIV/3;
- ✓ Implement tools for promoting integrated management such as strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments, spatial planning as well as accelerated expansion of marine protected area networks, consistent with international law, in under-represented coastal and marine environments both within and beyond national jurisdiction and incorporate them into their broader management frameworks;
- ✓ Sustain globally networked scientific initiatives to explore and catalogue the abundance, diversity and distribution of marine life, to identify ecologically or biologically significant areas, to assess the status of marine species and to monitor and assess human impacts on marine biodiversity;
- ✓ Support a series of regional workshops and other capacity building initiatives to facilitate the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas in open ocean waters and deep sea habitats;
- ✓ Contribute to the development of a CBD global inventory of ecologically or biologically significant areas; and
- ✓ Fully integrate marine and coastal related climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions into relevant national biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development strategies, action plans and programmes as well as funding strategies and priorities.

To support the implementation of the revised CBD Strategic Plan on protected areas, Target 11, IUCN calls upon COP10 to urge the United Nations General Assembly to:

- ✓ Expedite its consideration of mechanisms to enhance protection of ecologically or biologically significant areas beyond national jurisdiction, including through a possible new agreement to facilitate coherent spatial planning and representative marine protected area systems.

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## **The Global Ocean is under threat**

The Global Ocean remains under serious threat with new pressures stemming from climate change and ocean acidification. In order to reach the 2010 target on the application of the ecosystem approach adopted at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2012 target under the Convention on Biological Diversity to establish and maintain 10% of the marine realm as comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of marine protected areas, bold commitments and actions are needed to galvanise global, regional and national efforts to safeguard marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems.

IUCN strongly supports the recommendations from SBSTTA14 to COP10 on coastal and marine biodiversity and urges their adoption.

Climate change and ocean acidification compound pressures on ocean health, and must inspire a new urgency to reduce other stressors on coastal and marine systems.

The Global Ocean serves as the main buffer to climate change and will likely bear the greatest burden of impacts. The Ocean is the largest carbon sink on the planet, currently removing around 25 % of atmospheric carbon dioxide each year and absorbing 95 % of the sun's radiation. This heat has penetrated down to 2000 m deep, thus potentially threatening deep sea biodiversity and global ocean circulation patterns.

Ocean health influences the capacity of the ocean to absorb carbon, and the ability of organisms to adapt to climate change and ocean acidification. IUCN believes that integrated and adaptive management responses that span the global ocean will be required to safeguard coastal and marine biodiversity and ecosystem services.

As we have learned from the catastrophic oil well blowout in the Gulf of Mexico, it is far more cost-effective to take preventative measures to safeguard ocean health than to restore it.

## **In-depth review of the progress made in the implementation of the elaborated programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity, as contained in annex I to decision VII/5**

IUCN considers the comprehensive approach outlined in the SBSTTA14 recommendations for the elaborated programme of work an essential framework for further action. The programme addresses the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss and destruction, and will improve efforts to sustainably manage, protect and conserve biodiversity. Most importantly, if rapidly and effectively implemented, it can galvanise global-level action and stimulate sustained regional and national efforts to confront new challenges.

IUCN calls on COP10 to urge Parties to:

- ✓ Adopt the recommendations of SBSTTA14 regarding the elaborated programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity, as detailed in UNEP/CBD/COP/10/3 section XIV/3.

## **Identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) and scientific and technical aspects relevant to environmental impact assessment in marine areas**

IUCN expresses its appreciation to the CBD Secretariat, the host governments and the many experts who contributed to the workshops on the identification of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and environmental impact assessment in Ottawa, Canada and Manila, Philippines respectively.

The products of these two workshops can enhance national, regional and global efforts to protect significant areas and to reduce the adverse impacts of human activities on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. They can similarly guide efforts within national jurisdiction, as appropriate.

IUCN calls on COP10 to urge Parties to:

- ✓ Adopt the guidance contained in the Ottawa workshop report, and expedite the development of voluntary guidelines for EIAs and SEAs using the guidance

contained in the Mania workshop report annexes; and

- ✓ Review progress in identifying and protecting ecologically or biologically significant areas at COP11.

IUCN recognises that to address global ocean-wide impacts, as well as the 2010 target on the application of the ecosystem approach adopted at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2012 target under the Convention on Biological Diversity to establish and maintain 10% of the marine realm as comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of marine protected areas, significant new efforts and resources are needed to successfully scale-up conservation activities. IUCN highlights the importance of consolidating global standards for the identification of areas of importance for biodiversity.

IUCN thus urges Parties, other governments, relevant organisations, donors and others to:

- ✓ Support a series of regional workshops and other capacity building initiatives to facilitate the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas in open ocean waters and deep sea habitats;
- ✓ Contribute to a CBD global inventory of ecologically or biologically significant areas;
- ✓ Develop compatible initiatives amongst States, regions and relevant organisations to manage and protect areas of ecological or biological significance in order to prevent significant adverse impacts;
- ✓ Implement tools for promoting integrated marine management such as strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments as well as accelerated expansion of marine protected area networks, consistent with international law, into underrepresented areas;
- ✓ Support globally networked scientific efforts, such as the Global Reporting and Assessment of the Marine Environment (GRAME), IUCN Red List Global Marine Species Assessment, the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS), the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI), and a follow-up to the Census of Marine Life (CoML) including

support to national and regional scale efforts.

IUCN also considers that a synthesis of the impacts of underwater noise is an important basis for global action.

IUCN therefore recommends that COP 10 calls on Parties to:

- ✓ Request the Executive Secretary to compile and synthesise available scientific information on anthropogenic underwater noise and its impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats.

IUCN strongly recommends that complementary legal and policy initiatives are needed from the United Nations General Assembly in order to effectively scale-up conservation efforts in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.

To support the implementation of the revised CBD Strategic Plan on protected areas, Target 11, IUCN calls upon COP10 to urge the United Nations General Assembly to:

- ✓ Expedite its consideration of mechanisms to enhance protection of ecologically or biologically significant areas beyond national jurisdiction, including through a possible new agreement to facilitate coherent spatial planning and representative marine protected area systems.

## **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**

Progress made to date towards establishing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to protect the marine environment has been very low. There is a pressing need to establish new MPAs and MPA networks in under-represented coastal and marine environments and particularly to address the gaps in MPA coverage to include continental shelves, open ocean and deep sea areas both within and beyond national jurisdiction. IUCN therefore strongly recommends States to explore options at the United Nations for establishing MPAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction. IUCN strongly supports the need for a separate target on conservation and achievement of well-connected systems of effectively management protected areas in coastal and marine areas.

IUCN calls on COP10 to recommend that Parties:

- ✓ Convene an expert workshop on the scientific guidance for selecting areas to establish a representative network of marine protected areas, including in open ocean waters and deep-sea habitats (COP 9 Decision IX/20, Annex II);
- ✓ Adopt the revised CBD Strategic Plan on protected areas, Target 11, to ensure that by 2020 at the latest at least 15% of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity, are conserved through comprehensive, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of effectively managed and well-governed protected areas and integrated into the wider land- and seascape.

Currently, 5 per cent of coastal areas are protected, while very little of the open oceans are protected. Many sites of global significance for biodiversity conservation remain unprotected. A major effort to expand marine protected areas is essential. IUCN is therefore proposing that at least 15% of all coastal and marine areas be conserved through comprehensive, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of effectively managed and well-governed protected areas and integrated into the wider land- and seascape. Additional measures are needed to protect areas of ecological or biological significance and other key biodiversity areas.

IUCN recommends States, other governments and relevant organizations to:

- ✓ Adopt the Marine Protected Area Plan of Action and the report entitled “Global Ocean Protection: Present Status and Future Possibilities” (*Toropova et al. 2010*);
- ✓ Reiterate the importance of the commitment to upload Marine Protected Area data to the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA);

Communication and information flow lie at the heart of any process to accelerate action to protect the oceans. IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) is leading the way in developing a network of networks to achieve significantly better information flow and communication on marine protection. This underpins enhanced use of existing information, skills and capacity.

IUCN invites Parties, other governments, and relevant organisations to consider:

- ✓ Supporting WCPA-Marine’s agenda to build this global network and provide support in running this network to give global cohesion to ocean protection efforts;
- ✓ Supporting the WCPA-Marine Global Plan of Action to enhance actions at a strategic level to make better progress to protect the Ocean.

### **Impacts of destructive fishing practices, unsustainable fishing, and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing on marine and coastal biodiversity**

IUCN considers that further action remains needed to address the significant impacts that fishing activities, including IUU fishing, can have on marine and coastal biodiversity.

IUCN calls upon Parties, other Governments and relevant organisations, as appropriate, to:

- ✓ Develop and implement mechanisms to assess the impact of fishing activities on marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystem services with a view to safeguarding ecological integrity and preventing significant adverse impacts;
- ✓ Prevent bottom fishing on the high seas unless impact assessments consistent with the UN FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries on the High Seas have been conducted and measures have been adopted to i) prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems and ii) ensure the long term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks have been adopted.

In addition, IUCN urges COP10 to call on Parties to:

- ✓ Request the Executive Secretary to compile and synthesise available scientific information on the impacts of the exploitation of krill, particularly in the context of climate change and the stress it poses for marine life.

### **Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

IUCN welcomes and strongly supports the climate change-related recommendations from

SBSTTA 14 to COP 10. Coastal and marine biodiversity play an important role for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Sustainable management, conservation, and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems can provide services that enable people to adapt to both current climate variability and long-term change. Coastal wetlands, such as mangroves and salt marshes, additionally contribute to the mitigation of climate change through sequestering and storing of carbon. Coastal and marine ecosystems are however lost and degraded at an increasing rate.

IUCN urges Parties, other governments and relevant organisations to:

- ✓ Incorporate the role and importance of marine and coastal biodiversity into international and national climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies;
- ✓ Fully integrate marine and coastal related climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions into relevant national biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development strategies, action plans and programmes as well as funding strategies and priorities;
- ✓ Identify and address the underlying drivers of marine and coastal ecosystem loss and destruction, and improving the sustainable management of coastal and marine areas.

IUCN recommends COP 10 to call on Parties to:

- ✓ Adopt option 3 of paragraph 8 to work towards a joint CBD/UNFCCC expert workshop on oceans and climate change to promote better understanding of issues of common interest to the two Rio conventions with a view to achieve option 1.

### **Impacts of ocean acidification on marine and coastal biodiversity**

Ocean acidification is a direct consequence of increased human induced carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations in the atmosphere, and is presently progressing at a rate exceeding any known to have occurred for at least the past 25 million years. Ocean acidification as well as ocean warming will also reduce the solubility of CO<sub>2</sub> in ocean water, thus reducing the capacity of the ocean to buffer climate change. The biodiversity, ecological and economic implications of ocean acidification are subject to much research, but will potentially be severe,

initially more pronounced in polar areas. Ocean conditions may become corrosive to tropical reefs by mid 21<sup>st</sup> century.

IUCN urges Parties, other governments and relevant organisations to:

- ✓ Incorporate the latest findings on the impacts of ocean acidification and the specific importance of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> into their policies and emission reduction targets.

### **Impacts of ocean fertilisation on marine and coastal biodiversity**

IUCN urges Parties, other governments and relevant organisations to:

- ✓ Continue to implement decision IX/16C on ocean fertilisation, and to promote the adoption of globally-binding regulations through the London Convention and Protocol that prohibit ocean fertilisation activities other than legitimate scientific activities necessary to enhance our knowledge and modelling of ocean biogeochemical processes.

### **Impacts of unsustainable human activities on marine and coastal biodiversity**

Finally, IUCN calls on COP10, Parties, other governments and relevant organisations to:

- ✓ Cooperate, in accordance with international law, to prevent the negative impacts and risk of unsustainable human activities to the marine and coastal biodiversity.