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Background

This document contains draft concept on theme 4 of the Ministerial outcome “Implementing SDGs and regional ocean governance”. It has been prepared in the intersessional drafting group led by Sweden and consisting of representatives of Finland, Poland, Germany Latvia, and EU as well as HELCOM Secretariat. The document compiles all the documents provided to Sweden.

This draft concept is to be further developed into a proposal for the text of the Ministerial outcome. The aim is to condense the text and streamline it with other themes.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the draft concept and the plan to use it as the basis for further drafting of the Ministerial outcome.

Draft concept on Ministerial Theme 4: Implementing SDGs and regional ocean governance

Suggested elements to be included in ministerial declaration 2018

The vision

We suggest as a vision for theme 4 a ministerial meeting that embraces Agenda 2030 and SDGs as a framework for reinforcing the importance of reaching BSAP existing goals before 2021, updating BSAP and strengthen regional governance through cross-sectional institutional cooperation to ensure delivery of the ecosystem approach.

The possible outcome

- Enlightened authorities and ministers [and national established foundation] for future BSAP
- Ministerial declaration relating to old commitments that become the focus of the work in the short term. These can be aligned with or framed across relevant SDGs vis a vis delivery of the SDG14 goal.
- Ministerial declaration relating to new commitments that become the frame for BSAP beyond 2021. These can be aligned with or framed across relevant SDGs vis a vis delivery of the SDG14 goal.
- Ministerial declaration that formalises the role of HELCOM in the light of the 2030 Agenda as it pertains to the Baltic Sea and enables formalisation of enhanced cross-sectoral institutional cooperation. This regional governance perspective could also embrace for example relevant EUSBSR and MSFD goals and consider CFP objectives.

The content

Relevant documentation

There are several documents that should provide a good basis for this theme. Among them are:

- The HOD 52-2017 document by the HELCOM executive secretary (2-7),
- the HELCOM outlook and Measuring progress for the same targets – HELCOM,
- the conclusions from the HELCOM High-level meeting Helcom 38,
- the HELCOM voluntary commitments,
- UN Sustainable Development Goals, and
- UNEP documents, UNEA 2 Resolution on Oceans and Seas¹ and other documents for and from the SDG 14 NY Conference including the *Our Oceans, Our Future; Call for Action*.

The SDG and the Regional Seas Conventions HELCOM work

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. It contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, many of which are highly relevant to the work of HELCOM and other Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. While governments have the primary responsibility for implementation of actions to achieve these targets and goals, Regional Seas Conventions are the natural home for establishing mechanisms for regional and inter-regional coordination at the sea-basin level, as well as follow-up and review of the actions taken towards relevant SDG goals.

¹ UNEP/EA.2/Res.10

Regional ocean governance could include forming partnerships and enhancing cross-sectorial inter-institutional cooperation.

HELCOM can concretely contribute to achieving SDG 14 and targets 6.3., 6.6., 6b. 12.4 and 13.2. A number of targets under SDGs 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12 and 17 are also relevant to HELCOM work. And additional targets could be linked to marine litter (1.4, 11.6, 12.4, 12.5), climate (13.1, 13.3), and biodiversity (15.5, 15.9, 15a).

This could in a declaration be expressed as:

We the ministers of.....

Para on Agenda 2030

Welcoming the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1, of 25 September 2015 entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” as important contribution of sustainable development, conservation and management of the resources and uses of the oceans and seas to achieve the international development goals, contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

And **Commit** to implement the universal UN 2030 Agenda in a coherent and comprehensive manner, including the dedicated goal and targets on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans (SDG 14) within given timelines, bearing in mind that the SDGs are integrated and indivisible; / **Recalling** the integrated and indivisible character of all Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the inter-linkages and synergies between them, and reiterating the critical importance of implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

Paras on Our ocean conference and call for action

WELCOMING the first high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, here Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, held from 5 to 9 June 2017 at the UN premises in New York.

Reaffirming the commitment of the Baltic states to the “Our ocean, our future: call for action” Declaration (A/CONF.230/11) adopted at the UN Ocean Conference, and **WELCOMING** the results of the seven partnership dialogues and singular voluntary commitments made at this conference; **TAKING NOTE** of the EU Council Conclusions on International Ocean Governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans” (2017) and

ENDORSE the implementation of the three voluntary commitments made by HELCOM at the UN Ocean Conference including the overarching commitment to strengthening the full implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan to support ocean-related SDGs (#OceanAction17174) and **Commit** to accelerate the full implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan goals with special focus on those that are also framed as SDG goals and targets;

LOOKS FORWARD TO progress towards a strategic and integrated approach for achieving sustainable development around the Baltic Sea;

Paras on Helcoms role and regional importance in implementing SDG 14 (here the need for enhancing CROSS-SECTORIAL cooperation within regions should be highlighted a little bit more)

ACKNOWLEDGES that collaboration at regional level makes a significant contribution to the achievement of SDG 14; and **CONFIRM** that HELCOM has an important role to play in continuing coordination of regional implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (and other ocean related targets).

Noting the importance of promoting regional and international cooperation and coordination in order to mobilize strong and more ambitious effective action in ocean affairs by Governments, multilateral regional and global organizations, civil society, industry, universities, research centers and NGO's and all other relevant stakeholders.*[comment by Finland: this has especially been done through EUSBSR]*

NOTING that regionally strengthened processes are also helpful to overcome existing structural hurdles and support integrated management approaches for protection of oceans' and seas' and sustainable resource uses.

Therefore, specifically SUPPORT enhanced cooperation within and between relevant regional organizations, such as the Regional Seas Conventions HELCOM and OSPAR, regional fisheries bodies and other multilateral environmental agreements and with respect to the conservation of large marine ecosystems, where appropriate;

Against that background, WELCOMES the joint EU and German voluntary commitment at the Our Oceans Conference on Malta in October 2017 to establish a cross-sectoral and cross-boundary multi-stakeholder platform for regional oceans' governance by 2020. This platform will be developed collaboratively with international partners under the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG), initiated in 2015, and will look at the challenges *via* three different levels - within regions, between regions and between the regional level and the global level.

Welcome the political progress made in reducing the environmental impact of the maritime transport sector in the Baltic Sea [during 2016-2017] as a result of collaborative long-term effort with the involvement of governments, industry and NGOs:

- the designation of the Baltic Sea as a NOx Emissions Control Area enabling Helcom to report a voluntary commitment at the UN Ocean Conference committing to designation and enhancement of implementation of the Baltic Sea as NOx Emission Control Area for ships and public-private partnership, and
- the recent IMO decisions on the applicable dates of enforcement of MARPOL Annex IV special area Baltic Sea [1 June 2019 for new IMO registered passenger ships and 1 June 2021 for existing passenger ships with an extension until 1 June 2023 for direct passages between St. Petersburg area in Russia and the North Sea].

Congratulating HELCOM for being the driving force behind these developments on sustainable maritime transport in the region, stressing the importance to fully exploit the potential of the HELCOM GREEN TEAM platform to enable voluntary reductions of NOx emissions from [existing] ships [built before 2019] and committing to carrying out further improvements to the port reception facilities for sewage in the region.*[check wording, FI: Can HELCOM congratulate itself?]*

Decide to continue to make full use of the possibilities offered by good regional governance of the Baltic, to achieve more environmental progress and

Confirm that HELCOM will continue leading the coordination² of regional efforts to contribute as Convention to the objectives of relevant multilateral processes to deliver on the relevant SDGs [and related new and emergent issues], through e.g. improved implementation³/effective assessment and monitoring/ other [enforcement?].

² EC suggests: Invite HELCOM to continue, within its mandate, with its leading the coordination..

³ Question raised by Finland: Who should implement HELCOM or e.g. EUSBSR??

Call for a strengthened cooperation with international and regional organizations with complementary mandates to work towards the implementation of, and reporting on, the different ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets,

[Commit/Agree/ Decide] to use HELCOM as the platform for regional coordination [and joint reporting] of the implementation of relevant SDGs in the Baltic,⁴ taking into account the critical interlinkages among the targets of Goal 14 and the potential synergies between SDG 14 and the other Goals, particularly those with ocean-related targets, as well as other processes that support their implementation. [but **Noting** that reporting is a national responsibility.]

Reaffirm that the regional reporting and assessments can make a useful contribution to the World Ocean Assessment and the Global Sustainable Development Report.

[Ministers could clarify the role of HELCOM instruments in a distributed governance.]

[Ministers could support / request/ decide on inter-institutional cooperation.]

Paras on Helcoms role and regional importance in implementing SDG 6 and overall interdependence with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development

Paras on cooperation cross-sectorial and inter-regional

Strengthen and expand the cross-sectorial, regional and inter-regional partnerships, in the region, in response to ever growing challenges in the Baltic Sea region.⁵

ENDORSE/Enhance collaboration with other Regional Sea Conventions, as well as regional bodies, to draw from each other's experience in the work towards SDGs and other relevant marine targets and in particular OSPAR to strengthen collaboration on common challenges such as i.a. seafloor integrity, non indigenous species, noise, migratory birds, MPA network and management, threatened and endangered species that are listed by both Conventions i.e. harbor porpoise and eel.⁶

To work together with Ospar and the European Commission in regard of efficient use of scientific resources including seeking greater synergies between the data collection processes under CFP (Data Collection Framework) and the MSFD, particularly in view of the potential benefits to both policies in collecting coordinated data for ecosystem-based management, and effective use of ICES advisory services.

[Welcome/ Endorse] strengthened mutual cooperation between HELCOM and Baltfish (EU fisheries group for the Baltic Sea) and/or Baltic Sea Advisory Council to promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity including protection of marine ecosystems in the Baltic Sea of harmful fisheries, and in particular

STRIVE FOR close cooperation:

- in areas of added value such as sharing of aggregated data on fisheries activities in the Baltic for the purpose of assessing pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems,

⁴ FI: What do this in practice mean?

⁵ FI: EUSBSR is doing this?

⁶ EC suggests not to include eel

- regarding conservations plans/actions for marine endangered species such as, eel and harbor porpoise,⁷
- on sharing experiences between different countries, on fisheries management in MPAs,
- on the development of strategies for ecosystem-based management of fisheries,
- regarding fisheries interests within the marine spatial planning,
- concerning the potential role of the fishing fleet as an actor in reducing waste and litter in the marine environment, as well as noise.

Paras on Blue Economy with link to theme 3

One para on blue economy needed in regard to SDGs. SE will come back with proposal.⁸

Para on EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

ACKNOWLEDGE that projects under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has given substantial contribution to the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan and WELCOME further work under the EU Strategy to strengthen the cross-sectorial, regional and inter-regional partnerships to find innovative approaches and support implementation of Agenda 2030 in the Baltic Sea Region, and ENCOURAGE to explore the potential to integrate the use of Helcom monitoring systems in the development of monitoring system under the EU Strategy, *[to consider if examples of e.g. how PA Hazards has contributed to BSAP, could be included]*

[Paras on international organizations]

CONTINUE cooperation with global organizations with a mandate related to the oceans, including through new or existing frameworks including IMO for closing the NECA and MARPOL V work

Recall the decision CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/3 regarding strategic actions with respect to mainstreaming and the integration of biodiversity within and across sectors that stress the importance of collaboration i.a. between the regional fisheries management organizations and regional seas conventions with regard to addressing biodiversity considerations in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

Para on Baltic Sea Action Plan Fund

ACKNOWLEDGE the need for further innovative technical solutions and investments to implement the Baltic Sea Action Plan, TAKING NOTE of the XX projects implemented under the NIB/NEFCO Baltic Sea Action Plan Fund,

Contribute to SDG 14.1⁹.

⁷ EC suggests not to include eel; **FI:** Could this species be as examples where there is a urgent need on cooperation??

⁸ **WR:** In this para the direction and definition of this term should be clarified, in the sense of green /sustainable economy and not in the sense of maritime growth. Aa further food for thought: Along the Blue Growth concept, see also Valletta Declaration, Malta, 20 April 2017, para 1: "Support the blue economy concept as a marine and maritime based-economy which is well-managed, sustainable and aims at reconciling ocean-related sustainable economic growth with improved livelihoods and social equity for current and future generations and the strengthening of transparent, reliable and more secure food systems, based on the conservation of marine ecosystems and biodiversity and on sustainable use of resources. Recommend further work within the Blue Growth Strategy to make the value of healthy and productive oceans for the blue economy more visible."

⁹ **UBA:** Shouldn't there be a para that refers to all targets of Goal 14 from a governance perspective and not, as proposed, a selected one? Has to be seen in the context of the BSAP commitments, too. That call for enhanced

Ministers could request Contracting Parties to speed up the implementation of agreed commitments [to specify] regarding:

- the work to reduce nutrient inputs, especially for phosphorus
- the work to reduce hazards and pharmaceuticals
- the later agreed marine litter regional action plan, including microplastics
- manage the reduction of invasive aquatic species [EU Regulation]
- address the impacts of ocean acidification [given rising carbon dioxide level as Baltic Sea problem]

.... [coherence with drafting groups 2 and 3 and cross-references to Goal 14 and targets]

To contribute to SDG 14.2 and 14.5¹⁰

Urge Contracting Parties to speed up the development of operative management plans for all marine protected areas, including consistency in the management¹¹ for connectivity between MPAs and REAFIRM the voluntary commitment made at the UN Ocean Conference to identify ecologically **or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA) in the Baltic Sea to be used i.a for MSP purpose as well as supporting the development of coherent, ecologically representative and well connected MPA network.**

Urge Contracting Parties to protect and marine and coastal biodiversity especially from significant adverse impacts and use sustainably and xxx to work on the conservation measures towards the protection of Red listed species and habitats, biotopes and biotope complexes.

Other elements or paras of relevance:

- EUSBSR PA HAZARDS: To engage in the reduction of Dioxins and other harmful substances (pharmaceuticals, oestrogens) that put at risk the consumption of marine products from the Baltic Sea.¹²
- CENTRAL ACTORS in BALTIC WATERSHED: The role of river basin authorities, regional and local governments and municipalities.
- BUSINESS: Innovation, sustainable development and engaged private sector.

governance . That would, as an example, also include cooperative action to reduce invasive aquatic species and address the impacts of acidification – Or what is meant with these two headlines referring only to 14.1. and 14.2 und 14.5. and the following requests of Ministers to take action on selected Goal 14 targets? **EC:** Let's not limit it just to the three targets, we could look into the language that was prepared for the HELCOM HoD February meeting.

¹⁰ **FI:** There is only reflection to SDG 14.5 but we are missing wordings to SDG 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

¹¹ **FI:** There is only reflection to SDG 14.5 but we are missing wordings to SDG 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

¹² **FI:** Do we want to give recommendations for single policy area??

- EDUCATION: How can HELCOM best make use of Univ. around the Baltic Sea and the World Maritime University? How can Helcom contribute in the work of Ocean Literacy!

Additional comments from Finland

First of all, the text is too long and too specific. Theme 4, as a part of the ministerial declaration, should be shorter and more focused (max. one page).

More specifically:

- HELCOM should be in the center of this declaration and referred to as the main intergovernmental environmental organization in the Baltic Sea Region
- There is no point to endorse decisions taken by other organisations or, in multilateral agreements,
- There should be very few (or no) paragraphs that refer to the past e.g. past conferences
- Every paragraph should be crystal clear!
- The declaration text should focus more on HELCOM's role and what it will do in the future (future goals and objectives).