



GESAMP

Joint Group of Experts on the
Scientific Aspects of Marine
Environmental Protection

GESAMP 45/2
13 July 2018
ENGLISH ONLY

45th session
Agenda item 2

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF GESAMP

1 This has been another productive period for GESAMP. The main focus, since the 44th session, has been on the planned activities of the Working Groups. It is pleasing to note that the Working Groups have been particularly productive this year in terms of the completion of reports or advanced drafts for publication in the Reports & Studies Series.

2 The support from the UN Sponsoring Organizations is greatly appreciated and GESAMP urges that this level of support should be maintained and, if at all possible, increased. The independence, credibility and cost-effectiveness of the GESAMP model are well recognised, and the continuing delivery of high quality outputs are appreciated by the target audience and a much wider user-group. This can only be maintained with continuing support from the UN Sponsoring Organizations, financially and in-kind. The addition of the International Seabed Authority as one of GESAMP's sponsoring organisations is most welcome. It has been encouraging to see the efforts being made to maintain or increase this support by agencies, but also to note the success in securing funding from a diverse range of sources for particular working group activities, from governments and regional bodies.

3 In recent years inter-sessional correspondence groups (CGs) have addressed several important issues, to help evaluate whether these are areas GESAMP may wish to develop further. A new CG was agreed at the 44th Session to update the estimate of the relative importance of land- and sea-based sources of pollution (the 80:20 conundrum) and a substantive draft text is available for discussion under Agenda item 7.

4 The Chair wishes to acknowledge the continuing efficient and enthusiastic support of the GESAMP Office, including the contribution of Ms. Chrysanthe Kolia as the GESAMP Administrative Coordinator. The Chair wishes to record his personal appreciation of the support and helpful counsel of Fredrik Haag, as Technical Secretary for IMO, and to welcome the arrival of Andrew Birchenough, bringing the Office back to full strength. The Office continues to receive ad-hoc requests for GESAMP to contribute to UN, intergovernmental and regional initiatives, as well less formal requests for advice or support from the media and those in the education sector. It is encouraging to see that GESAMP is seen as a source of reliable information and advice.

GESAMP and the wider community

5 The Chair attended the Annual Science Conference of PICES¹, which took place in Vladivostok in September 2017. He took part in the special session on microplastics, presenting the current work plan of GESAMP WG40, as well as taking part in discussions with the PICES Marine Environmental Quality Committee.

6 The Chair was invited, by UN Environment, to be a panel member for the Science-Policy-Business Forum which immediately preceded the 3rd UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi, in November 2017. The panel session was entitled: 'Saving oceans from plastic pollution – a look at alternative materials and green design'. He also contributed to a number of sessions during UNEA-3, related to marine litter and plastics.

¹ The North Pacific Marine Science Organisation

7 The Chair was invited to attend a number of other international events during the year, but had to decline due to a number of factors, including resource constraints.

Action by GESAMP

8 GESAMP continues to be recognised as a source of reliable and impartial science assessment and advice. This accolade can only be maintained if there is sufficient in-kind support and financial backing to provide a vibrant programme, providing a cost-effective service for the agencies and responding to requests from external bodies to contribute GESAMP experience and expertise. There appear to be two components to ensuring GESAMP can thrive: i) for the Sponsoring Organizations to commit to supporting GESAMP both in terms of sponsoring Members to attend the annual Session and offering financial support for working group and other ad hoc activities; and ii) to pursue partnerships between Sponsoring Organizations and external funding bodies such as industry, foundations, intergovernmental bodies, national governments and NGOs.
