



**GESAMP**

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

GESAMP 49/2  
24 August 2022  
ENGLISH ONLY

49th Session  
Agenda item 2

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## **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF GESAMP**

### **Submitted by the Chair of GESAMP**

#### **Introduction**

1 The Chair notes that, as a consequence of the COVID pandemic, this is the first 'physical' meeting of GESAMP since the 46<sup>th</sup> meeting and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary hosted by DOALOS in New York in 2019. GESAMP has continued its work mainly by correspondence/remote means, and currently has eight active working groups and several correspondence groups and task teams.

2 Two Members' intersessional meetings and one Executive Committee intersessional meeting were held during the twelve-month period. Members also attended a variety of meetings, workshops, etc. which are noted in the following sections of the report.

#### **Summary of Member's intersessional - November 2021**

3 A Member's intersessional meeting was held 'virtually' on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Members welcomed Alexander Girvan as a new Member. The Members then addressed the following issues:

- .1 The review of GESAMP;
- .2 the development of a summary of reports for managers and policy-makers;
- .3 the establishment of a Task Team to keep a watching brief on climate change;
- .4 the establishment of a Task Team for the UN Decade of Ocean Science;
- .5 the provision of advice on emergency situations;
- .6 further scoping of emerging issues as identified during the 48th annual session; and
- .7 the GESAMP communications strategy.

#### **Summary of Executive Committee Intersessional – March 2022**

4 The Chair and Vice-Chair attended the ExCom intersessional meeting in March 2022. It should be noted that the UNFCCC attended the meeting, as they had expressed an interest in possibly becoming a Sponsoring Organization.

5 Other issues discussed, included GESAMP's contribution to the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and the Working Groups, Correspondence Groups and Task Teams.

6 The Chair of GESAMP also provided an update on the outstanding issues arising from GESAMP 48. This included:

- .1 the development of standard summary statements on scientific implications of new GESAMP Reports (Summary for Managers and Policy Makers). This was being developed through input from the Chair;
- .2 the establishment of a Task Team to keep a watching brief on climate change issues within the GESAMP Working/Correspondence Groups. GESAMP Members volunteered to develop a first draft of a TOR for this Task Team and to establish membership.
- .3 the establishment of a mechanism to provide advice to Sponsoring Organizations in relation to emergency response and/or urgent requests for advice. Here, the Chair noted that this had been tested in practice during the recent incident of the NS Qingdao, off the coast of South Africa, where GESAMP had provided informal advice to the Government of South Africa, on the request of IMO's Office for the London Convention/Protocol and Ocean Affairs. Both the South African Government and IMO had expressed their appreciation for the support from GESAMP. ExCom noted that as illustrated by this case, the mechanism for advice already exists and there was no need to develop a new procedure for this purpose.

7 Further to the above, the ExCom invited GESAMP to develop scoping papers on the issues identified under emerging issues last year, namely:

- .1 The use of CO<sub>2</sub> scrubbers in reducing carbon output related to shipping of cargo;
- .2 Energy transition, decarbonisation, related to the H<sub>2</sub> economy and the transport of NH<sub>3</sub> (ammonia) whereby spillages could potentially disturb the N-cycle; and
- .3 Artificial light and noise.

### **Summary of Member's Intersessional – July 2022**

8 At its intersessional meeting in July 2022, GESAMP welcomed two new Members, Mario Tamburri (Chair of WG 44) and Vanessa Hatje (Chair of WG 45).

9 A brief updated was given from the UN Ocean Conference held in Lisbon in late June-early July. GESAMP noted that the Chair had participated in several side-events and held bi-lateral meetings throughout the Conference. In addition, Beth Holland attended the Conference in person and Chris Vivian had been one of the panelists on a virtual side-event on marine cloud brightening. IMO (through its Secretary-General, the Administrative Secretary and the IMO Technical Secretary) also promoted GESAMP's work throughout the Conference, including at 11 side-events, two high-level events, and the Interactive Dialogue on marine pollution.

10 The Chair further informed the Members of the very useful meeting held in Lisbon, where ISA expressed its appreciation to GESAMP for its feedback on the proposed Regional Environmental Management Plan for the Mid Atlantic Ridge and reaffirmed its support to GESAMP as a Sponsoring Organization. They thanked GESAMP for the advice provided and assured that this would be injected into the discussions at the appropriate time. ISA also noted that it would be difficult to host the annual GESAMP session now in 2023 in Jamaica due to workload and that 2024 would be preferable.

11 As per usual, the respective Chairs of the Working Groups provided updates on relevant developments, and the Chair updated the Members on the status of a number of actions arising from the ExCom intersessional in March 2022.

### **Outreach efforts in the intersessional period**

12 Since the last annual session, the Chair has contributed to a number of side events at the Lisbon Ocean Conference as well as giving presentations on GESAMP to UN Decade – A Clean Ocean, IPCC, UNFCCC COP 26 - Atmospheric Deposition, the invisible threat – impacts on agriculture, ecosystem and oceans, and to the Red Sea EcoConference. The Chair has developed a standard ‘This is GESAMP’ presentation which can be modified by any Members wishing to use it.

13 In addition, the Vice-Chair gave a keynote presentation during the second UN Decade Laboratory on a predicted ocean (Sept 2021), attended the Global Environment Monitoring System for Ocean and Coasts (GEMS Ocean) Programme meeting. She also presented a keynote lecture to the Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership/Atlantic Canada Coastal and Estuarine Science Society (BoFEP/ACCESS) Annual conference on ocean issues, the UN and the inextricable linkages between ocean and climate literacy, where the importance of GESAMP was highlighted. She was also invited to participate in the UNEP-led webinar on the science-policy panel on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention in July 2022, where she stressed the importance of involving GESAMP for marine aspects.

### **Membership issues**

14 Since the annual session in 2021, GESAMP has welcomed three new Members, Mr. Alexander Girvan, Mr. Mario Tamburri and Ms. Vanessa Hatje. This has filled gaps in expertise related to economics, environmental valuation, non-indigenous species transmission, biofouling, and the effect of impacts from climate change on contaminants in the ocean. The current Membership stands at 19 individuals.

15 In May 2022, Ms. Tracy Shimmield announced that she would step down as Vice-Chair of GESAMP due to other commitments, while continuing her duties as Chair of WG 42 and generally as a Member of GESAMP. GESAMP formally acknowledged her request to step down along with expressing its sincere thanks to her for her dedication and input over the previous years as joint Vice-Chair.

### **Action requested by GESAMP**

16 GESAMP is invited to note the information provided and comment as appropriate.

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