



MINUTES SSC/2020/29

February 7, 2020

11:00 AM EST - Via Zoom Conference Call

Participants:

Mr Frederico Cardigos, Commissioner
Prof Stephen de Mora, Commissioner
Sen Wilfred Moore, Commissioner
Mrs Rochelle Newbold, Commissioner
Prof Howard Roe, Commissioner
Mr Mark Spalding, Commissioner
Dr Billy Causey, Emeritus Commissioner
Dr David Freestone, Executive Secretary
(Apologies, Dr Tammy Warren, Commission Acting Chair)

1. Minutes of 18 December 2019 Meeting (MOS/SSC/2019/28)
 - Approved.

2. **Executive Secretary** presented an update of Work Programme implementation to-date:
 - 1.1. Signatories
 - 1.2. Commission
 - In January 2020, the Bermuda Cabinet approved the appointment of two international experts to the Sargasso Sea Commission. Professor Howard Roe will serve a third term, and Mrs Rochelle Newbold (Director of the Bahamas Environment, Science, & Technology Commission) will serve her first term. The **Executive Secretary** congratulated both, and welcomed Commissioner Newbold to the team.
 - He also recognized Dr Billy Causey for his years of service, who will be continuing his involvement as an Emeritus Commissioner (as agreed by consensus of the Commission). The other Commissioners and the Secretariat all briefly introduced themselves.
 - The draft chapter for the 2nd UN World Ocean Assessment has been submitted to the editors for review. The Commission thanked

Commissioner Roe for taking the lead on this and his writing team – including **Commissioner Warren**, Laurie Kell, Brian Luckhurst and the **Executive Secretary** - for all their work on this draft.

1.3. Secretariat

- Nothing to report.

1.4. Collaborating Partners

- The Commission now has 29 Collaborating Partners, has finalised an MOU with the International Seabed Authority and is talking to ICCAT about an MOU
- **Commissioners de Mora** will follow up with Plymouth Marine Lab as to whether they would be interested in becoming a Collaborating Partner. He will also approach the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.
- The **Secretariat** wrote a draft proposal to host a joint event with the Oceano Azul Foundation in conjunction with the UN Oceans conference in Lisbon in June 2020.

1.5. Fisheries

- **Commissioner Warren** attended the ICCAT Commission meeting in Madrid in November 2019 and reported that there were no objections to the Ecosystem Subcommittee's recommendations regarding using the Sargasso Sea as a pilot site for the development of ecosystem based fishery management indicators which was proposed in the report of the SCRS Ecosystem Subcommittee. Dr Laurie Kell and Dr Brian Luckhurst have already started work on this. The **Executive Secretary** will continue discussions of an MoU with ICCAT.

1.6. Sea Bed

- The wording of a draft MoU between the Secretariats of the International Seabed Authority and the SSC has been finalized and signed by the **Executive Secretary**. The **Secretariat** will circulate the final draft MoU to the Commission.

1.7. Migratory Species

- The CMS and SSC Secretariats drafted a proposal for a Single Species Action Plan, which the Principality of Monaco will present to CMS COP13 in Gandhinagar, India, from 15-22 February 2020. The SSC will aim to support the development of this Single Species Action plan if it is approved.
- **Commissioner Cardigos** noted that during Oceans Week in Brussels, he heard about a new initiative, titled, Power to the Eel, led by the Good Fish Foundation. He will keep the Commission informed of any developments with this initiative.

1.8. Finance and Fundraising Report

- The Commission is grateful to the Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation for agreeing to move the date of their 2020 grant of \$25,000 from July to January.
- Fisheries & Oceans Canada has signed a contribution agreement to provide \$100K of operational funding to the Secretariat this fiscal year ending March 2020, with a renewal next fiscal year.
- Thanks to support from the French biodiversity agency (AGF), the French **Global Environment Facility (FFEM)** is currently considering a joint proposal from the Sargasso Sea Commission and the Costa Rica Thermal Dome project, with the Ocean University in Brest, for a 3 million Euro grant over 5 years. The final proposal received a favourable review from the Scientific and Technical Committee in September and the FFEM Steering Committee in November. The next step is an evaluation mission in early 2020. The **Secretariat** will re-circulate the final proposal to the Commissioners.
- It is expected that a Programmatic Proposal will be submitted by FAO to the June GEF Council Meeting, which can include Child Project Proposals. The proposal was circulated for a further round of comments before the holidays. At the FAO Common Oceans meeting held in Rome in January 2020, the project was allocated \$3 million. Positive comments were received from the GEF Secretariat as well as NAFO and ICCAT during the meeting.

1.9. Mapping and Monitoring

- The NASA COVERAGE project continues to be a partner as it moves into its next phase. Dr Eric Lindstrom has retired from NASA, but Dr Vardis Tsontos will be the new contact.

1.10 Communications

- The Secretariat Programme Manager, **Ms Tess Mackey**, reported that the social media outlets, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, are doing well. The next edition of the newsletter will be released next month. Commissioners are encouraged to submit photos and blurbs of recent happenings to the Sargasso On-the-Go section of the newsletter.
- **Commissioner Roe** and the **Executive Secretary** attended a preparatory meeting for the Odyssey Connect Hackathon. The Hackathon will be held from 3-5 April in Groningen, Netherlands.

3. Any Other Business

4. Date of Next Meeting

- The next SSC meeting will be confirmed via Doodle poll.