



**MINUTES SSC/2020/30**

**April 14, 2020**

**11:00 AM EST - Via Zoom Conference Call**

**Participants:**

**Dr Tammy Warren, Commission Acting Chair**  
**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 David Freestone, Executive Secretary**  
**(Apologies, Dr Billy Causey, Emeritus Commissioner)**

1. Minutes of 7 February 2020 Meeting (MOS/SSC/2020/29)
  - Approved.
  
2. **Executive Secretary** presented an update of Work Programme implementation to-date:
  - 1.1. Signatories
  - 1.2. Commission
    - The **Executive Secretary** will follow up with PS Rozy Azhar in Bermuda about expediting the Commissioner appointment process.
  - 1.3. Secretariat
    - Nothing to report.
  - 1.4. Collaborating Partners
    - The Commission now has over 30 Collaborating Partners and is exploring MoUs with several sectoral organizations.
    - **Commissioner de Mora** followed up with Plymouth Marine Lab as to whether they would be interested in becoming a Collaborating Partner and sent the contact information for the new Chief Executive of PML. He has

also approached the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, and recommended the **Secretariat** follow up with them in regards to cofinancing.

- The **Secretariat** wrote a draft proposal to host a joint event with the Oceano Azul Foundation in conjunction with the UN Oceans conference, which is now postponed. **Commissioner Cardigos** will send more details about their “Rise Up” initiative.
- REV Ocean has expressed interest in using their research vessel for a cruise in the Sargasso Sea.

#### 1.5. Fisheries

- **Laurie Kell and Brian Luckhurst** have authored a series of papers regarding the Sargasso Sea as a pilot site for the development of ecosystem based fishery management indicators, which the **Secretariat** will circulate to the board. **Dr Kell** is also in discussions with Duke, NASA, and the ICCAT Secretariat to obtain useful data. Due to COVID-19 concerns, the SCRS Ecosystem Subcommittee will be hosted virtually by the Sargasso Sea Commission Secretariat.

#### 1.6. Shipping

- Once funding is available, the Secretariat hopes to hire a consultant to conduct a detailed assessment of vessel traffic in the Sargasso Sea Area to present to IMO.

#### 1.7. Sea Bed

- The MoU between the Secretariats of the International Seabed Authority and the SSC has been finalized and signed by both parties.
- The **Executive Secretary** will follow up with the Gallifrey Foundation as to regarding their interest in supporting the SSC delegation in the future.

#### 1.8. Migratory Species

- The CMS COP in Ghandhinagar in February approved the Single Species Action Plan for the European Eel prepared by the CMS and SSC Secretariats and presented by the Principality of Monaco. The SSC is supporting the development of the Single Species Action plan. The EU may provide support for the next Range States meeting.
- Commissioner Cardigos reported on developments regarding eels marked and released on the island of Flores by researchers from the University of the Azores.

#### 1.9. Finance and Fundraising Report

- **Commissioner Spalding** noted that The Ocean Foundation was eligible for a small business grant due to the COVID-19, and applied for support which would include short-term salaries for TOF staff.

- 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.
- The contribution agreement with Fisheries & Oceans Canada to provide \$100K of operational funding to the Secretariat this fiscal year ended in March. There is potential for renewal this 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 Consultants had asked to meet with the Commission as a group and maybe individually as well. The **Secretariat** will schedule a Commission meeting for them and re-circulate the final proposal to the Commissioners for careful review.
- The Programmatic Proposal was submitted by FAO to GEF Secretariat for the June GEF Council Meeting. If the Program is approved, the Sargasso Sea Project would be eligible to receive a Project Preparation Grant from GEF. This PPG would allow for the hiring of consultants and funding meetings in order to prepare the final project document to be sent for GEF CEO approval within 12 months. The Secretariat engaged a consultant to conduct an assessment of potential Executing Agencies, which was sent to UNDP last week for their decision. The **Executive Secretary** will follow up with UNDP for their decision.

#### 1.10. Mapping and Monitoring

- It was noted that Dr Tsontos had sent a small pilot presentation prepared by COVERAGE including remote sensing data on sea-turtles and blue fin tuna. The **Secretariat** will circulate to the Commission.

#### 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 most recent edition of the newsletter was released at the end of March. Commissioners are encouraged to submit photos and blurbs of recent happenings to the Sargasso On-the-Go section of the newsletter.

### 3. Any Other Business

### 4. Date of Next Meeting

- As agreed on the call, the next SSC meetings will be **May 19 at 11 AM EDT** (which will focus on a discussion of the FFEM grant with the consultants if they are available), and **June 18 at 11 AM EDT**.