



DRAFT MINUTES SSC/2016/9
28 July 2016
10:00 am EST - Via Conference Call

Participants:

Dr. Tammy Trott, Commission Acting Chair
Dr. Billy Causey, Commissioner
Prof. Stephen de Mora, Commissioner
Prof. Howard Roe, Commissioner
Mr. Mark Spalding, Commissioner
Prof. Ricardo Santos, Commissioner
Dr. David Freestone, Executive Secretary

1. Minutes of 26 May 2016 Meeting (SSC/2016/8)

APPROVED.

2. Dr. David Freestone presented an update of Work Programme implementation to-date:

2.1 Signatories

- Bahamas has formal approval to become a Signatory with official signing possibly in September 2016.
- Discussed status of Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Grenada, Canada, and Thailand.
- New Minister and PS in Bermuda need to be briefed in person (22-23 August) on Signatory process, so that signatory outreach should progress more quickly.
- Hamilton Declaration will be posted in Spanish and Portuguese on website.

2.2 Commission

- Composition: Howard Roe has agreed to serve 1 more year term; Billy Causey has agreed to serve another full term; DF will inform the signatories that as a result of their continued service, no election is needed this year.
- Bermuda Trip: DF will travel to Bermuda to meet with the new Minister of the Environment and the PS on 22-23 August 2016.
- A comprehensive Draft Stewardship Plan is being developed under the oversight of SSC Secretariat staff, which will require SSC review and approval; SSC will try to meet in person in mid-October and dedicate 1.5 days to reviewing the draft plan. The draft plan will be provided in advance of the meeting to the SSC.

2.3 Collaborating Partners

- Work progresses on MOU with UNEP Cartagena Secretariat; to revisit UNEP Abidjan later.
- Nekton: Commissioner Trott reports that the Canadian Coast Guard research vessel, *Hudson*, is in Bermuda and has been doing research on seamounts under supervision of Dr. Ellen Kenchington in connection with Nekton. The other Nekton research vessel is the *Baseline Explorer*.

2.4 Fisheries

- ICCAT: Commissioner Roe reports that he is working with Brian Luckhurst to develop a new report for ICCAT. Luckhurst will attend relevant ICCAT meetings as consultant for SSC.
- WECAFC: Faith Bulger participated as an official observer at the Annual WECAFC meeting in June and reports that WECAFC agreed to continue to progress towards RFMO status over the next 5-7 years and adopted a recommendatory closure of the high sea seamounts (the Corner, New England, Wyoming, and Congress and Lynch Seamounts) and the Mid-Atlantic Ridge Hydrothermal Vent in the WECAFC jurisdictional area. WECAFC used the EBSA descriptions for these areas when deciding to recommend a prohibition of bottom trawling in these areas.
- NAFO: Due to funding constraints, SSC will not likely send an official observer to the NAFO meeting in Cuba this year.

2.5 Shipping

- Bermuda cruise lines report: Draft report will be circulated for SSC comments; discussions to resume with Bermuda Government regarding MOU with cruise lines upon completion of report.

2.6 Sea Bed Issue

- ISA: Dr Philomene Verlaan led an AAC official observer delegation to the Annual ISA meeting in Jamaica in July. Her report will be circulated. It was noted that Michael Lodge was elected Secretary General of the ISA.
- SSC could consider developing a proposal to close the Sargasso Sea to seabed activities under the ISA jurisdiction as an area of environmental interest.

2.7 Migratory Species

- European Eel Range States Technical Workshop, 13-14 October 2016: Contracts for background papers are in process; invitations are being issued by the CMS Secretariat; with expected funding from Galway Marine Institute, the Government of the Netherlands, and SSC.
- Micro Electric Power: Commissioner Santos noted that Micro Electric Hydropower is currently an issue of key interest in Europe, as well as IUU fishing of glass eels for export to Asia.
- Humpback Whale Sister Sanctuary Program: Faith Bulger reported that SSC staff is working with the NOAA Humpback Whale Sister Sanctuary program to coordinate

potential proposals in the Sargasso Sea and to assist in developing a Tripartite Whale Sanctuary with Bermuda, Dominican Republic and the US.

2.8 Finance Report

- Current financial status is extremely tight for July to October of 2016 until either the Rockefeller donation or the third year funding from Helmsley is received. Current obligations will be met, but higher than expected funding from SSC for the Galway Range States meeting is anticipated during this period putting pressure on our resources.
- Efforts to improve our fundraising proposals to Bertarelli Foundation and other potential donors are being spearheaded by Commissioner Spalding and supported by a supplementary grant of USD 15,000 from Helmsley Foundation for strategic fundraising activities.

2.9 Mapping and Monitoring

- NASA Pilot Project: JPL team and SSC staff are discussing follow-up for the transfer of the Sargasso Sea mapping project to the SSC. Financial support to take this over will be an issue.

2.10 Communications

- IUCN WCC: Dr Freestone to attend the IUCN WCC, 1-10 September 2016, for several events involving the Sargasso Sea and the SSC work.
- UN BBNJ Prep Com: JPL team will attend to discuss the Sargasso Sea Mapping Project as a side event.
- World Ocean Day (State Dept): SSC Staff will attend.
- From a submarine under the Sargasso Sea, UNESCO will launch its World Heritage Sites in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction report containing the recommendation that the Sargasso Sea be considered as a world heritage site. The formal release of the report will occur later.

2.11 Other Issues

3 Any Other Business

4 Date of Next Meeting

September, date to be determined by email.