



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**Between**

**THE SECRETARIAT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE  
PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES**

**and**

**THE SECRETARIAT OF THE SARGASSO SEA COMMISSION**

This Memorandum of Understanding is entered into by and between the Secretariat of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (hereinafter "IAC"), and the Secretariat of the Sargasso Sea Commission (hereinafter "SSC"), jointly called "the Participants";

**WHEREAS**, that the objective of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) is to promote the protection, conservation and recovery of sea turtle populations and the habitats on which they depend, based on the best available scientific evidence, taking into account the environmental, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the IAC Parties;

**WHEREAS**, the mandate of the Sargasso Sea Commission, established pursuant to the 2014 Hamilton Declaration on Collaboration for the Conservation of the Sargasso Sea (the "Hamilton Declaration") is to exercise a stewardship role for the Sargasso Sea and keep its health, productivity and resilience under continual review, in collaboration with all who share a vision for the protection of the marine ecosystem of the Sargasso Sea;

**UNDERSTANDING** that, based on the best available scientific data, species of sea turtles in the Americas are threatened or endangered and that some of these species could face an imminent risk of extinction;

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**AWARE** that the feeding and other habitats of some sea turtle species coincide with areas in the Sargasso Sea that are within the geographical area of collaboration defined by the Hamilton Declaration and that those habitats may be subject to activities that could cause a negative impact on habitat conservation or negatively affect sea turtles from performing their unique role in marine ecosystems;

**RECALLING** that Article XII of the IAC text states that the IAC "Parties shall promote bilateral and multilateral cooperative activities to further the objective of this Convention";

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that the Sargasso Sea Commission is mandated to promote collaboration and to keep the health, productivity, and resilience of the high sea ecosystem of the Sargasso Sea under review and that it seeks, wherever appropriate, to cooperate with competent international or regional bodies;

**NOTING** that two of the Contracting Parties to the IAC are also Signatories to the Hamilton Declaration;

Considering the desire of both Participants to formalize their relationship for working together towards the conservation and sustainable use of sea areas containing habitats vital for sea turtles and to maintain such area's biodiversity and health, both Participants undertake to strengthen their co-operation in the spirit of an efficient and effective partnership as follows:

## **I. Objective**

The objective of this Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter "Memorandum") is to provide a framework for collaboration in the work of the IAC and the Sargasso Sea Commission in order to promote, within their respective mandates, the more effective conservation of sea turtle species and the habitats that they utilize and upon which they depend, as well to promote the dissemination of the best available scientific evidence regarding their important ecosystem role.

## **II. Areas of Cooperation**

The activities to be undertaken under this Memorandum will be set out in a joint work plan elaborated by both Secretariats and subject to applicable approvals. The work plan is to be reviewed to assess progress and make adjustments as needed and may, amongst others, include:

(a) Regular exchange of information on relevant activities and actions of the IAC and the Sargasso Sea Commission set out in the joint work plan that are of mutual interest and benefit as well as exchange of information, databases, and other materials to enable early detection of threats to sea turtles and to facilitate the necessary studies and analyses to identify measures for the mitigation of such threats, issues and needs;



(b) Cooperation and mutual support, where appropriate and practical, in the collection of data and relevant information; including activities such as:

- a. exchanging reports of meetings of relevance to each other;
- b. sharing relevant contacts for scientific research and training.

(c) Co-ordination and collaboration in the development of joint programs and projects on issue of mutual interest and concern, and working together to mobilize resources for implementing such programs and projects;

(d) Support each other in promotion, outreach, and communications activities of mutual interest;

(e) Informing, and inviting each other's participation, as appropriate, in scheduled meetings, studies, field visits to sites, the design, organization and carrying out of training programs, public awareness, education and information dissemination activities, and other activities to promote the awareness of the synergies between the work of the two bodies. The results of the joint collaborative activities carried out within the framework of this MOU may be published or used with the consent of the Participants.

### **III. Review, modification and discontinuation**

The Memorandum may be reviewed at the request of either Participant. Any modification must be in writing by mutual decision of both Participants.

The Memorandum may be discontinued, unilaterally by either Participant upon giving advance notice of 90 days (3 months).

### **IV. Legal Status**

This Memorandum is not intended to be binding under international law. Nothing in this Memorandum is intended to constitute a legal or financial obligation.

### **V. Disagreements**



Both Participants intend to resolve, by mutual decision and negotiation any disagreement that may be generated in the interpretation and/or application of this Memorandum.

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**VI. Effective Date**

This Memorandum is to take effect upon the date of the signatures of the Secretary of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles and the Executive Secretary of the Sargasso Sea Commission.

Signed in duplicate in the English and Spanish languages on the .....of April 2023 both texts being equally authentic.

  
Verónica Cáceres Chamorro  
Secretary  
IAC  


  
Dr David Freestone  
Executive Secretary  
SSC

26/4/23