Activity Report

IMO Regional Ballast Water Management Workshop:
Third Regional Task Force Meeting on the Ratification and Implementation of the IMO Convention on Ballast Water Management

Panama City, Panama
June 5-9, 2017

Organized by
The International Maritime Organization, and RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe

Summary: This regional workshop was organized in accordance with RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe’s proposal to IMO’s Technical Co-operation Committee for the Center’s activities of the 2016-2017 biennium. The workshop was the Third Regional Task Force Meeting on the Ratification and Implementation of the IMO Convention on BWM in the WCR (RTF-WCR) and was attended by representatives from: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Curacao, BES Islands, Panama, Malaysia and the United States of America. The primary purpose of the workshop was to review and update the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) with an aim of implementing the SAP. Additionally, participants were informed of: the present status of the BWM Convention and progress being made at the global level; the current status of the Convention in the region; and lessons learned from other countries for ratifying and implementing the Convention. The meeting also provided delegates with scientific and technical presentations that addressed: marine invasive species in the WCR and across the globe; methodologies used in the designation of ballast water exchange zones; and lessons learned from the US Coast Guard (USCG) BWM Program and the US National Ballast Water Information Clearinghouse. RTF-WCR member delegates agreed on: updates to the SAP; steps to be taken towards implementation of the SAP; Rules or Procedures for the RTF-WCR; revised Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange and Sediment Management in Wider Caribbean Region areas; a framework for developing a Clearinghouse Mechanism; and the election of Colombia as Chair, Jamaica as First Vice-Chair, and Panama as Second Vice-Chair for the RTF-WCR.
SUMMARY SHEET

Title of workshop: IMO Regional Ballast Water Management Workshop: Third Regional Task Force Meeting on the Ratification and Implementation of the IMO Convention on Ballast Water Management

Host: The Government of Panama, Panama Maritime Authority, Maritime Services Division; and the Panama Canal Authority

Venue: Wyndham Panama Albrook Mall, Panama City, Panama.

Date: 5-9 June 2017

Type: Regional Workshop

Organized by: IMO and RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe

Supported by: The Malaysian Government, Ministry of Transport; The Government of Panama, Panama Maritime Authority and assistance from: IMO; United Nations Environment; RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe; The Panama Canal Authority; Maritime Authority of Trinidad and Tobago; United States Coast Guard; Smithsonian Environmental Research Center; and Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute.

No. of participants: 30 delegates from 22 countries, and 10 technical experts

Programme Number: TC/1762-05-2290

Participating countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint. Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Curacao, BES Islands, Panama, Malaysia and the United States of America

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1. Introduction

1.1 This workshop was the Third Regional Task Force Meeting on the Ratification and Implementation of the IMO Convention on BWM in the WCR. The first RTF-WCR meeting took place in December 2009 in Panama, and the second took place in April 2012 in Trinidad and Tobago. The delegates for this meeting were selected based upon their country’s status as members of the RTF-WCR. The primary purpose of the workshop was to review and update the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) with an aim of implementing the SAP. Additionally, participants were informed of: the present status of the BWM Convention; the current activities and progress being made at the global level; the current status of the Convention in the region; and lessons learned from Malaysia, Bahamas, Colombia, Jamaica, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago in their experiences with BWM. The meeting also provided delegates with scientific and technical presentations that addressed: marine invasive species in the Caribbean and across the globe; methodologies used in the designation of ballast water exchange zones; and lessons learned from the US Coast Guard (USCG) BWM Program and the US National Ballast Water Information Clearinghouse. Delegates agreed on updates to the SAP, steps to be taken towards implementation of the SAP, and revised Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange and Sediment Management in Wider Caribbean Region areas.
2. Background

2.1 RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe has been involved with the organization of workshops related to marine bio-invasions and BWM since 2006.\(^1\) In June 2006, a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) compilation of current information related to BWM in the WCR determined that:

...a Regional Action Plan with stakeholder participation is needed to link together individual national and / or sub-regional plans to regional and global plans, in order to maximize synergies.\(^2\)

2.2 In August 2007, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe was approved as a Regional Coordinating Organization (RCO) for the WCR under the second phase of the GloBallast Programme (the GLoBallast Partnership Programme) that was initiated in 2005.

2.3 In December 7-9 2009, the First GloBallast Regional Task Force Meeting was convened by RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, within the framework of the GloBallast Partnerships, in Panama City, Panama. The meeting was organized in collaboration with the Caribbean Regional Coordination Unit of United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP-CAR/RCU) and the Central American Commission of Maritime Transport (COCATRAM), and with support of the Panama Maritime Authority. During this First GloBallast Regional Task Force Meeting, the Terms of Reference for the establishment of a Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region (RTF-WCR) were discussed and adopted by the delegates. RTF-WCR was established to include the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Venezuela and El Salvador. The meeting participants also discussed the Regional Strategy to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms

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and Pathogens in Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments and established a draft document. A work plan was also established. The final report of this first meeting and its Annexes were presented for endorsement at the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe 5th Ordinary Steering Committee meeting, held in Curacao, May 11-12, 2010; and at the Fourteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Eleventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, that was held in Montego, held in Jamaica from 6-9 October 2010.

2.4 The Regional Strategy was first reviewed and amended at a two-day Second Regional Task Force Meeting on the Ratification and Implementation of the IMO Convention on Ballast Water Management (BWM) that was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 17-18 April 2012. The result of the second RTF-WCR meeting was that the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) was developed and finalized, adopted by the RTF-WCR, and forwarded to the regional focal points for endorsement. The final version of the SAP was presented to the 6th Ordinary Steering Committee (OSC) Meeting of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe on 10 May 2012, and endorsed by the 15th IGM for the Cartagena Convention that was held in Punta Cana, La Altagracia, Dominican Republic, on October 25-27, 2012.

2.5 This revised 2012 Strategic Action Plan (SAP) sought to provide a regional framework for the activities needed to be developed and implemented within the WCR in order to:

2.5.1 mitigate, minimize and eventually eliminate the transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens (HAOP) in ships’ ballast water, in accordance with the BWM Convention and relevant programmes such as the GEF/UNDP/IMO GloBallast Partnerships Project (GBP);

2.5.2 enhance regional cooperation and capacity in BWM matters towards the protection and conservation of the marine environment in the WCR using the existing regional bodies;

2.5.3 encourage the accession to the BWM Convention by IMO Member States; and

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2.5.4 facilitate the harmonized implementation of effective ballast water management strategies and policies within the Region.

2.6 As the Secretariat of the RTF-WCR and an RCO, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe has assisted developing countries of the WCR over the years with ratifying and implementing the International BWM Convention in order to decrease the risk of marine bio-invasions. As such, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe has played a key role in the WCR, both regionally and nationally, in helping to implement measures to control and manage ship’s ballast water and sediments in accordance with the BWM Convention. As the BWM Convention entered into force on 8 September 2017, and the GloBallast Partnerships Project ended in June 2017, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe will need to continue to facilitate a more comprehensive participation and longevity for BWM initiatives and coordination in the WCR through IMO's Technical Cooperation Division.
3. Workshop Objectives:

3.1 Considering all the above mentioned reasons, the objectives of this workshop were to:

3.1.1 Bring forth discussion on, and as appropriate, facilitate the reestablishment of the Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region and El Salvador (RTF-WCR);

3.1.2 Review, revise and revitalize the 2012 Regional Strategic Action Plan (RSAP) to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, for the Wider Caribbean Region;

3.1.3 Receive and discuss lessons learned from the WCR Lead Partnering Countries of GloBallast Programme;

3.1.4 Discuss ways the Countries of the WCR may want to coordinate regionally in order to implement and enforce the Convention, and/or harmonize the implementation of national and regional BWM Strategies in line with the BMW Convention;

3.1.5 Present lessons learned from the GloBallast Project;

3.1.6 Capture the questions and concerns from the Wider Caribbean Maritime Authorities for moving ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention forward throughout the WCR.

3.1.7 Facilitate the exchange of information related to BWM issues among the countries of the WCR, which is timely and essential to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the BWM Convention throughout the WCR.
4. Program

4.1 This workshop was organized by Mr. Keith Donohue and Ms. Carla Bikker of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe under the auspices and direction of IMO’s Marine Environment and Technical Cooperation Divisions, with support and cooperation from The Malaysian Government, Ministry of Transport and The Government of Panama, Panama Maritime Authority.

4.2 In addition to the host country, Panama, and the sponsoring country Malaysia, the participating countries sponsored to attend the workshop included: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Panama.

4.3 Day One, Monday, June 5 2017: The first day of the workshop began with a report from the RTF-WCR Chairperson about activities of the RTF-WCR and an overview of the SAP, followed by an overview of the BWM Convention and possible technical cooperation after conclusion of the GloBallast programme that was provided by IMO until June 2017. The day concluded with presentations about lessons learned from Malaysia, Trinidad and Tobago, Bahamas, Jamaica and Colombia regarding BWM activities in their countries.

4.3.1 Following adoption of the agenda, welcoming remarks were provided by: Mr. Marcus Helavuor of IMO; Mr. Garnet Best, the RTF-WCR Chair; Mr. Keith Donohue of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe; and Ms. Vanessa Reyes of the Panama Maritime Authority. Ms. Mok Lay Yong from The Maritime Institute of Malaysia also provided welcoming remarks and noted that The Government of Malaysia is supporting capacity building programs for BWM in collaboration with IMO for the benefit of other countries and they are keen on strengthening human capacity in the Caribbean as well as facilitating knowledge exchange between the Caribbean Region and Malaysia.

4.3.2 Delegates from all countries then introduced themselves to the group.

4.3.3 Mr. Keith Donohue of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe provided an overview of the Center’s missions and an overview of the BWM activities that they have been involved with in the region over the years.

4.3.4 Mr. Garnet Best, the RTF-WCR Chair, provided an overview of the RTF-WCR and the SAP, and noted that while there has been action taken at the regional-
level by IMO and RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, as well as by individual countries, there has not been much activity specifically done by the RTF-WCR itself. Since the second RTF-WCR meeting in 2012, there was no activity carried out specifically by the RTF-WCR.

4.3.5 Mr. Marcus Helavouri of IMO presented a synopsis of the BWM Convention including guidelines and annexes, and noted that the Convention will enter into force in September 2017. Delegates discussed the different interpretations of Regulation B-4 which deals with ballast water exchange. Mr. Helavouri noted that this issue is currently being discussed at IMO and that there should be a guidance document issued in July 2017 to clarify the requirements. Until then, ships must comply with the requirements of the Port States where they are travelling to. The delegates also questioned on the availability of technologies, with Mr. Helavouri indicating that IMO has verified that there are sufficient ballast water treatment technologies available for all kinds of ships. The BWM Convention Guidelines 1-14 can be found on the IMO website along with additional guidelines and circulars that provide further information on topics related to the Convention. IMO is also finalizing a manual: Ballast Water Management: How to Do It, which will simplify and summarize the BWM Convention and Guidelines into one document. Mr. Helavouri also presented on the latest developments to the BWM Convention along with a roadmap for implementation of the Convention, including new timelines for installation of ballast water treatment systems that are provided in Resolution A.1088(28). Delegates discussed the possibility of countries having to change their legislation due to amendments to the BWM Convention. IMO noted that this is dependent on how legislation was written and that if legislation refers to the Convention, and all of its amendments, then there may be no need for changes to national legislation. Lastly, Mr. Helavouri presented an update on the conclusion to the GloBallast project and next steps for continuing to build capacity and action for the BWM Convention.

4.3.6 Delegates discussed the possibility of developing a specific guideline for BWM in the Caribbean, similar to guidelines that are available for the Antarctic (MEPC.163(56)). Delegates also discussed the possibility of perhaps establishing the Wider Caribbean Region as one risk area in order to facilitate
same risk area designations. This option, however, was found to be highly unlikely from a scientific point of view as there are several known biological sub-regions within the WCR (Annex 7 Figure 3). Delegates also considered submitting the outputs of this workshop to the MEPC for greater visibility and awareness, and IMO presented possible options for doing this as well as noting that in order for documents to be considered at MEPC 72, they would need to be submitted by January 5, 2018. RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe also noted that recommendations from this workshop could possibly be used to generate future proposals for IMO Technical Assistance support.

4.3.7 Ms. Mok Lay Yong and Ms. Lee Siang Hing, of the University Malaysia, Terengganu, provided an overview of the IMO/Norad project that was implemented in Malaysia, beginning in 2010. A summary of activities that occurred since the beginning of the project and lessons learned were shared. Delegates discussed how funding for the project was obtained, the need for regional cooperation and risk assessments in order to determine same risk areas, and the inclusion of concessions in order to consider some transits as domestic voyages, when they may briefly pass through international borders.

4.3.8 The WCR Lead Partnering Countries of the GloBallast Programme then provided updates on activities taken. Mr. Best of Trinidad and Tobago reported on development of a national task force (NTF) and the four reports completed under the GloBallast Programme. In the absence of national legislation, Trinidad and Tobago used a Precautionary Approach to guide BWM. Ms. Adelle Thomas, of the University of the Bahamas, provided an overview of the development of four reports completed in The Bahamas under the Programme, and discussed how the lionfish is being addressed by collaborations between government, non-governmental organizations and fishermen in the Bahamas. Colombia has also completed the four reports and detailed their efforts to implement BWM without being a signatory to the BWM Convention. Mr. Marco Mendoza and Mr. Fabian Cabrales of Colombia also detailed their proposal to develop ballast water exchange areas at the regional level, and to create an academic node for marine biological invasions at the regional level to promote scientific exchange. Mr. Hugh Small of The University of the West Indies, MONA, presented on the completion of the GloBallast reports and draft national legislation in Jamaica, and noted that
the draft legislation that has been prepared to implement BWM will hopefully be passed this year. Mr. Small also shared that the University of the West Indies (UWI) is interested in acting as a scientific arm for the RTF-WCR and is open to providing services to the region with their marine invasive species lab.

4.4 **Day Two, Tuesday, June 6 2017:** The second day of the workshop focused on presentations about BWM, invasive species, specially protected areas and lessons learned about BWM in the USA.

4.4.1 Ms. Regina Bergner, US Coast Guard, provided an overview of the processes associated with the spread of invasive alien species as a primer for the more scientific and technical presentations for the day.

4.4.2 Mr. Whitman Miller, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, presented on the status and patterns of BWM and species invasions in the WCR and provided an overview of the National Ballast Information Clearinghouse and the NEMESIS database of invasive species in the USA. Delegates discussed the increased mortality of organisms as the age of ballast water increases and difficulties in determining ballast water exchange areas that meet requirements of the Convention.

4.4.3 Ms. Holly Sweat, of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, presented remotely and provided best practices for management of ballast water sediments and a case study of an established sediment removal service provider in the USA. Delegates discussed the differing disposal requirement of sediments depending on whether or not they are found to be hazardous and the recommendation that sediments be kept as dry as possible when being removed from tanks. According the Convention, sediment reception facilities must be made available where cleaning and maintenance of ballast water tanks takes place.

4.4.4 Mr. Andrew Sellers, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, presented on asymmetrical marine invasion across the Panama Canal and detailed biological barriers to invasions including parasites and predators. Delegates discussed the possibility of other countries besides Panama being involved with the NEMESIS database and it was noted that there is a possibility of standardized surveys of IAS being conducted throughout the region by the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center.
4.4.5 Ms. Hing Lee Siang, University of Malaysia Terengganu, presented on Malaysia’s port baseline surveys and ballast water sampling and provided details on the methodology used to conduct surveys of four ports in Malaysia and sampling activities of ballast water of ships. Delegates discussed the possibility of using these methodologies in their countries and noted that ballast water treatment systems will make sampling of ballast water more practical in the future. In terms of funding port baseline studies, it was noted that ship owners applying for an exemption may have to pay for these studies that would support risk assessments.

4.4.6 Mr. Alberto Capella, United Nations Environment, presented on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Programme (SPAW) under the Cartagena Convention and highlighted the need to ensure that ballast water exchange is not taking place in these protected areas. Delegates discussed the need for more in-depth analysis of different databases that are being developed under the different Protocols under the Cartagena Convention and how they can be related to each other. There also need to be management plans in place for protected areas that span nations. The Smithsonian Institute is currently working on determining transit areas for marine species and how these intersect with shipping trade lines. While there are no special areas designated under the BWM convention, IMO does identify protected areas, PSSA, that are linked specifically to shipping traffic and related to safety and shipping routes.

4.4.7 Mr. Fabian Ramirez Cabrales, Escuela Naval de Cadets, "Almirante Padilla", presented on the designation of ballast water exchange areas in the WCR and challenges in determining suitable areas including geographical and political configuration, biogeographic classifications of the WCR, increasing vessel sizes, high biodiversity and legal issues. Delegates discussed the proposed methodology and noted that Colombia is open to working with countries in the region to determine suitable exchange areas through technical assistance and sharing the methodology used. Colombia is open to working with RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe to share the methodology regionally.

4.4.8 Ms. Katharine Carney, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, presented an evaluation of the effects of BWM and trade dynamics on transfers of marine organisms by ships. Details of ballast water sampling procedures used in the
USA, how trade influences ballast water activity and the increased prevalence of ballast water management systems in ships arriving to the US. Delegates discussed the effectiveness of ballast water management systems in preventing the transfer of organisms via ballast water.

4.4.9 Ms. Regina Bergner, US Coast Guard, provided a summary of the US ballast water management systems program and the differences between USCG and IMO approvals for ballast water management systems, along with assessments of compliance and enforcement for vessels. Delegates discussed the need to determine the balance of responsibilities between ministries responsible for environment and ministries responsible for shipping in terms of compliance and enforcement of ballast water discharge.

4.4.10 Mr. Whitman Miller, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, also presented on lessons learned from establishment and operation of the National Ballast Information Clearinghouse (NBIC) and noted that enforcement of penalties for not submitting ballast water records resulted in increased compliance by ships and also that having a centralized system to store ballast water records also increased compliance. Delegates discussed the benefits of electronic submission of ballast water records, via email or web apps, and the usage of the clearinghouse as an enforcement tool. The clearinghouse allows for identification of non-compliant vessels that have not been submitting ballast water records. The NBIC is willing to provide advisory assistance and best practices as the WCR develops its own clearinghouse. This will need to be facilitated through the US Coast Guard and the Smithsonian.

4.5 Day Three, Wednesday, June 7 2017: The third day of the workshop was devoted to breakout groups where RTF-WCR members conducted an in-depth review of the SAP and provided feedback on ways to improve and update the document.

4.5.1 Mr. Hugh Small of Jamaica presented on marine invasive alien species research and capacity at the University of the West Indies (UWI), and stated that there are existing facilities to conduct species-level and toxicity identification of invasive species. UWI also has graduate students involved in ballast water sampling and houses the Caribbean Coastal Data Center, which is already used for coral data but can be expanded to house a repository of data about marine invasive species.
4.5.2 Mr. Garnet Best from Trinidad and Tobago presented the interest of the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) in hosting the regional BWM clearing house. UTT is also part of the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre for the Caribbean and the Advanced Centre for Coastal and Ocean Research and Development. UTT also has capabilities in DNA analysis and long-term sampling storage.

4.5.3 Delegates were then divided into two groups to begin review and updating of the SAP’s strategic priorities, actions and annexes. Group 1 focused on implementation, ratification and enforcement while group 2 focused on information exchange and dissemination. In the afternoon, all delegates participated in a review of parts of the SAP focused on regional harmonization and arrangements.

4.6 Day Four, Thursday, June 8 2017: On the morning of the fourth day of the workshop, delegates visited the Panama Canal and learned about the expansion of the canal and climate change adaptation efforts being implemented. Revisions to the SAP continued in the afternoon.

4.6.1 In the morning, delegates visited the Panama Canal. Mr. Roy Phillips, Environmental Division of the Panama Canal Authority, provided an overview of sustainable development and integrated water resources management at the Panama Canal watershed. A presentation on the contribution of the Panama Canal to reducing emissions from international shipping was also given which was followed by an overview of the expansion of the Canal. Delegates were then provided with a tour of the Panama Canal museum.

4.6.2 During the afternoon, Groups 1 and 2 presented their suggested revisions to the SAP, which were discussed by all of the delegates and changes to the SAP were agreed upon.

4.7 Day Five, Friday June 9 2017: On the final day of the workshop, review of the SAP was finalized, Rules of Procedure for the RTF-WCR were amended, and Panama provided a presentation about their experiences with BWM. The workshop concluded with a closing ceremony where all delegates were presented with certificates of participation.
4.7.1 Mr. Donohue of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, presented a proposal to move forward with the Actions identified in the SAP. Specifically, he discussed proposed revisions to the *Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange and Sediment Management in Wider Caribbean Region areas* and proposed a framework for developing a Caribbean Marine Invasive Species Clearinghouse Mechanism (CMISC) to meet the strategic objectives set forth in the SAP. Delegates discussed the proposals and agreed upon changes that were added to the SAP.

4.7.2 Mr. Sergio Lopez of the Panama Maritime Authority presented Panama’s experiences with BWM and provided an overview of activities undertaken during the GloBallast Programme, including the capacity of the Panama Maritime Authority to approve BWM plans and certificates.

4.7.3 The workshop delegates agreed that the report of this meeting, with the revised SAP annexed, should be presented for endorsement by the contracting parties of the Cartagena Convention and El Salvador, and at the next steering committee meeting of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe.

4.7.4 Election of Officers for the RTF resulted in Colombia being elected as Chair, Jamaica elected as First Vice-Chair and Panama as Second Vice-Chair.

4.7.5 Panama and RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe provided votes of thanks, delegates were presented with certificates and the meeting was adjourned.

4.7.6 A closing ceremony was conducted and all participants received certificates for their attendance and participation in the workshop.
5. Logistics

5.1 The workshop was organized by:

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5.2 The workshop language was conducted in English with a Spanish translation service provided.
5.3 The workshop was held at:

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6. Funding and Support

6.1 This workshop was organized by Mr. Keith Donohue and Ms. Carla Bikker of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe under the auspices and direction of IMO’s Marine Environment and Technical Cooperation Divisions, with support and cooperation from The Malaysian Government, Ministry of Transport and The Government of Panama, Panama Maritime Authority. Funding for was provided through IMO’s Integrated Technical Co-operation Program (ITCP) under the regional program: Support to Maritime Development, Caribbean (TC/1762), Activity 05.

6.2 Further assistance was provided by: Malaysia Maritime Institute; University Malaysia Terengganu; United Nations Environment Programme; The Panama Canal Authority; Maritime Authority of Trinidad and Tobago; United States Coast Guard; Smithsonian Environmental Research Center; and Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute.

6.3 Dr. Adelle Thomas, from The Bahamas, was contracted as a consultant to compile all relevant decisions and recommendations made during the Plenary and Breakout sessions of the workshop into a DRAFT REVISION of the Regional Strategic Action Plan (RSAP); and to compile all relevant information gathered from the workshop to be incorporated by RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe into the Final Workshop Report.

6.4 The Government of Panama and the Panama Maritime Authority provided outstanding support to RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe and all the participants. The assistance of Ms. Vanessa Reyes and her staff throughout the preparation and execution of the workshop was highly appreciated and most helpful. The hospitality of Mr. Phillips and the Panama Canal Authority was wonderful and very much appreciated by all participants. The wisdom and leadership of Mr. Garnet Best as the RTF-WCR Chairperson was essential to the workshop’s success. The support of the Government of Malaysia and representatives from the Malaysia Maritime Institute and University Malaysia Terengganu was very much appreciated.

6.5 The International Maritime Organization; United Nations Environment Programme; United States Coast Guard; Environmental Standards Division; Smithsonian Environmental Research Center; National Ballast Information Clearinghouse; and Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute at Florida Atlantic University also provided phenomenal technical experts who helped build the workshop agenda and attended the workshop either in person or virtually as instructors and facilitators. Consultant, Ms. Adelle Thomas, provided ideal contractor support prior to, during, and following the workshop in accordance with the agreed terms of
reference. The Wyndham Panama Albrook Mall, provided an excellent, fully equipped, lecture room for the workshop.

7. **Outcome, Decisions and Future Actions:**

7.1 **Strategic Action Plan (SAP):** The SAP for the RTF-WCR was reviewed, amended, and updated by the workgroup participants. The RTF-WCR member delegates agreed upon changes made to be incorporated into the revised SAP.

7.2 **Rules of Procedures:** Rules of Procedure were reviewed and revised by the workgroup participants.

7.2.1 The RTF-WCR member delegates agreed to make the following changes to the Rules of Procedures:

7.2.1.1 Change Rule 41 to English and Spanish;
7.2.1.2 Rule 12: First and Second Vice-Chairman should be from different countries;
7.2.1.3 Throughout the document, reference should be made to the Chair and not Chairman;
7.2.1.4 Rule 11-13: Election of Chair, First and Second Vice-Chair should reflect representation from different language groups
7.2.1.5 Rule 2: Virtual meetings should be accommodated. Following these changes, the Rules of Procedure were adopted.

7.2.2 The RTF-WCR member delegates agreed to incorporate the revised Rules of Procedures into the SAP.

7.3 **Clearinghouse Mechanism:** A proposed framework for the development of a Clearinghouse Mechanisms was presented and discussed by the participants:

7.3.1 The RTF-WCR member delegates supported the need to assign particular responsibilities to the Work Plan, in particular to ensure the development of a Caribbean Marine Invasive Species Clearinghouse Mechanism (CMISC) and agreed to assign action items to sub-workgroups.

7.3.2 To implement the plan for developing the Clearinghouse Mechanism, sub-workgroups were established with concurrence from the RTF-WCR member delegates. Delegates volunteered for participation in various sub-workgroups as follows:
7.3.2.1 **WCR Invasive Species Portal (ISP) Sub-workgroup**: RTF-WCR member delegates from Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago.

7.3.2.2 **WCR Port Biological Monitoring (PBM) Portal Sub-workgroup**: RTF-WCR member delegates from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Dominican Republic.

7.3.2.3 **Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee (SC) Portal Sub-workgroup**: RTF-WCR member delegates from Colombia, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

7.3.2.4 **Open-Ended Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) Portal Sub-Workgroup**: RTF-WCR member delegates from Dominican Republic.

7.3.2.5 **Closed-Ended (for RTF-WCR members official use only) Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) Portal Sub-workgroup**: RTF-WCR member delegates from Colombia and Jamaica.

7.3.2.6 **Outreach Portal Sub-workgroup**: RTF-WCR member delegates from Belize.

7.3.3 RTF-WCR member delegates supported the agreement moving forward to get the Clearinghouse Mechanism structure in place within 1 year of this workshop.

7.4 **Guidelines**: Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange and Sediment Management in the Wider Caribbean Region areas were reviewed, revised and amended,

7.4.1 Delegates agreed with updating the previous SAP Annex II *Harmonized Voluntary Arrangements for Ballast Water Management in The Wider Caribbean Region* into a revised *Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange and Sediment Management in the Wider Caribbean Region areas* to be incorporated into Annex III of the revised SAP.

7.4.2 The participants discussed different approaches to formally adopting and incorporating the Guidelines, and the RTF-WCR member delegates agreed that the Guidelines should be prepared and distributed as an IMO Circular for MEPC 72 in April 2018.
7.4.3 RTF-WCR member delegates agreed:

7.4.3.1 That the Guidelines should be circulated for approval by contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention prior to submission to IMO MEPC.

7.4.3.2 Following circulation, if concurrence is received, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe will submit the Guidelines to MEPC as an IMO Circular for the information and awareness of all IMO Party States.

7.5 Hull Fouling: The participants concurred that consideration should be given towards incorporating hull fouling into the SAP at the next RTF-WCR meeting.

7.6 Election of Officers: The RTF-WCR member delegates voted to elect the following Officers for the RTF-WCR:

7.6.1 Colombia, as Chair

7.6.2 Jamaica, as First Vice-Chair

7.6.3 Panama, as Second Vice-Chair

7.7 Incorporation of the SAP: RTF-WCR member delegates agreed that the report of this meeting, with the revised SAP Annexes, should be presented for endorsement by the contracting parties of the Cartagena Convention, and El Salvador, at

7.7.1 The next steering committee meeting of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe; and

7.7.2 The Eighteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Fifteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.
Annex 1 – Participants

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Provisional Agenda
Regional Workshop on Ballast Water Management (BWM)
Panama City, Panama, June 5-9, 2017

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Organization of the Meeting
   2.1. Rules of Procedure
   2.2. Background of the Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships’
        Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region and El Salvador
   2.3. Organization of work
   2.4. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Report of the RTF-WCR Chairperson
4. Report from IMO
   4.1 BWM Convention Overview
   4.2 IMO Guidelines and Guidance on Implementation
   4.3 Latest Developments / issues at MEPC
   4.4 Technical Cooperation after GloBallast
5. Ratifying an implementing the BWM Convention
   5.1 Lessons from NORAD Program in Malaysia
   5.2 Report from the Caribbean Participants in GloBallast Partnerships Programme
      5.1.1 Bahamas
      5.1.2 Colombia
      5.1.3 Jamaica
      5.1.4 Panama
      5.1.5 Trinidad and Tobago
6 Scientific and Technical Presentations:
   6.2 Status / patterns of ballast water management and species invasions in the
       Wider Caribbean Region
   6.3 Invasive species movement through the Panama Canal
   6.4 Management of Ballast Sediments
   6.5 Shipping and Marine Invasions in Panama’s waters of the Caribbean
   6.6 Evaluating effects of ballast water management and trade dynamics on
       transfers of marine organisms by ships
   6.7 Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol under the Cartagena
       Convention
   6.8 Designating Ballast Water Exchange Zones in the Caribbean
   6.9 Port Biological Baseline Surveys, lessons learned from Malaysia
6.10 USCG Mandatory BWM Program and BWM inspections trends & how it differs from the International BWM Convention
6.11 Lessons learned from 10 years, establishment and operation of The National Ballast Water Information Clearinghouse, how it serves the USCG & facilitates information exchange/research with scientific community.
6.12 Establishing a Clearinghouse Mechanism in the Wider Caribbean Region

7 Breakout Sessions: Review and Revision of the Strategic Priorities and Actions listed in the 2012 Regional Strategic Action Plan to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, for the Wider Caribbean Region

7.1 Implementation, Ratification and Enforcement.
7.1.1 Strategic Priorities: 2, 9, 10 and 11
7.1.2 Actions: 1, 2, 6
7.1.3 Annex I

7.2 Information Exchange and Dissemination.
7.2.1 Strategic Priorities: 3, 4, 7 and 8
7.2.2 Actions: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8

7.3 Regional Harmonization and Arrangements.
7.3.1 Strategic Priorities: 1, 5, 6
7.3.2 Actions: 3, 4, 9
7.3.3 Annex II

8 Panama Canal and the Panama Canal Authority (visit and tour)
9 Review, revise, amend and update the Strategic Plan
10 Adoption of the Report of the Meeting

11 Election of Officers for the Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region and El Salvador

12 Other Business
13 Closure of the Meeting
### Annex 3 – Chairman’s Agenda

**Chairman’s Agenda**  
Regional Workshop on Ballast Water Management (BWM)  
Panama City, Panama, June 5-9, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 1</th>
<th>Monday, 5 June 2017</th>
<th>Presenter/Facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:30-09:30</td>
<td>1. Registration</td>
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</table>
| 09:30-10:15 | 2. Organization of the Meeting  
    2.1 Rules of Procedure  
    2.2 Election of Officers for the Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region and El Salvador  
    2.3. Organization of work  
    2.4. Adoption of the Agenda | |
| 10:15-10:45 | Tea/Coffee Break | |
| 10:45-11:00 | Report of the RTF-WCR Chairperson  
Overview of the SAP | Trinidad & Tobago delegate |
| 11:00-12:30 | Report from IMO. Session led by:  
- BWM Convention Overview  
- IMO Guidelines and Guidance on Implementation  
- Latest Developments / issues at MEPC  
- Technical Cooperation after GloBallast | Mr. Markus Helavuori, IMO Technical Officer, Subdivision for Protective Measures, Marine Environment Division |
| 12:30-14:00 | Lunch | |
| 14:00-14:45 | Lessons from NORAD Program in Malaysia | Miss. Lay Yong Mok, Maritime Institute of Malaysia |
| 14:45-15:15 | Report from the Caribbean Participants in GloBallast Partnerships Programme  
- Trinidad and Tobago  
- Bahamas | |
| 15:15-15:45 | Tea/Coffee Break | |
| 15:45-16:15 |  
  - Jamaica | |
| 16:15-16:45 |  
  - Colombia | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 2</th>
<th>Tuesday, 6 June 2017</th>
<th>Presenter/Facilitator</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:30-08:45</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>08:45-09:30</td>
<td>Status / patterns of Ballast Water Management and species invasions in the Wider Caribbean Region</td>
<td>Whitman Miller, Smithsonian, NBIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:30-10:15</td>
<td>Invasive species movement through the Panama Canal</td>
<td>Regina Bergner, USCG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15-10:45</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:30</td>
<td>Management of Ballast Sediments</td>
<td>Dr. L. Holly Sweat, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:00</td>
<td>Shipping and Marine Invasions in Panama waters of the Caribbean</td>
<td>Andrew Sellers, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:30</td>
<td>Port Biological Baseline Surveys</td>
<td>Dr Lee Siang Hing, University Malaysia Terengganu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00-14:30</td>
<td>Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol under the Cartagena Convention</td>
<td>Alberto Pacheco, United Nations Environmental Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30-15:00</td>
<td>Designating Ballast Water Exchange Zones in the Caribbean</td>
<td>Capitán de Fragata Fabian Ramirez Cabrales, Ph.D. Centro de Investigaciones Científicas Escuela Naval de Cadetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00-15:30</td>
<td>Evaluating effects of ballast water management and trade dynamics on transfers of marine organisms by ships</td>
<td>Dr. Katharine Carney, Smithsonian, NBIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:30-15:45</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:45-16:15</td>
<td>USCG Mandatory BWM Program and BWM Inspections, trends, deficiencies, penalty stats..etc &amp; how it differs from the BWM Convention</td>
<td>Regina Bergner, USCG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15-16:45</td>
<td>Lessons learned from 10 years, establishment &amp; operation of NBIC, how it serves the USCG &amp; facilitates information exchange/research with scientific community.</td>
<td>Whitman Miller, Smithsonian, NBIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:45-17:45</td>
<td>Establishing a Clearinghouse Mechanism in the Wider Caribbean Region</td>
<td>University of the West Indies, International Maritime University of Panama</td>
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### DAY 3

#### Wednesday, 7 June 2017

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:30-10:15</td>
<td>Break Out Group 1&lt;br&gt;Break Out Group 2&lt;br&gt;Break Out Group 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15-10:45</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-12:30</td>
<td>Break Out Group 1&lt;br&gt;Break Out Group 2&lt;br&gt;Break Out Group 3&lt;br&gt;List recommendations, Stakeholders (persons, companies, agencies, NGOS). Steps, action items to be taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00-15:00</td>
<td>Report out and discussion Group 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00-15:15</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:15-16:15</td>
<td>Report out and discussion Group 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:15-17:15</td>
<td>Report out and discussion Group 3</td>
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### DAY 4

#### Thursday, 8 June 2017

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:30-12:30</td>
<td>Canal Visit&lt;br&gt;Canal Authority Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00-14:45</td>
<td>Panama Maritime Authority Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:45-15:15</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:15-15:45</td>
<td>Unfinished Business&lt;br&gt;Review of the Draft Revised SAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAY 5</td>
<td>Friday, 9 June 2017</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>08:30-10:15</td>
<td>Unfinished Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of the Draft Revised SAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15-10:45</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-12:30</td>
<td>Final Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing Ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 4 – Group Photos
Annex 5 – Results of the workshop evaluation

1. Was the invitation received in good time?

2. Did you receive the information listed below about the event before your participation?

3. Were the instructions on the following clear and easy to understand?

4. Did you receive logistical information on

5. If you were given any pre-event assignment, was it useful?
6. To cover the topics fully, was the event (please check the appropriate box)

7. How do you rate the event with regard to the following?

8. How do you rate the following aspects of the materials?

9. How would you rate the following aspects of the presentations?

10. How would you rate the use of the following?
11. Please rate each lecturer with regard to the following:

12. What topics were of most interest and relevance to you?
   - Ballast water exchange areas
   - Ballast water sampling and port biological surveys
   - Patterns of BWM and species; management of ballast sediments; lessons from NORAD program Malaysia
   - Evaluating effects of BWM (Katharine Carney)
   - Ballast water in the Pacific region
   - Designated areas of ballast water exchange
   - Relevant topic invasive species in Central America in the Pacific Ocean
   - The biologist approach and the lecture about the website. To send the WBM (report to port state authorities) was brilliant!!
   - IMO lecture
   - Invasive species
   - Because we are just getting into the BWM I think that every aspect was useful.
   - All topics were relevant. However environmental impact was greatest for me.
   - Clearing house and all biological aspects
• Countries experience in implementing the convention.
• Details regarding logistical aspects of BW exchange and management
• Country specific challenges and activities related to understanding and regulating ship behavior as they relate to marine invasions
• Issues + current status of BWM in WCR. GloBallast countries updates were very interesting.
• The Malaysian sampling process
• BWM convention, scientific information
• Implementation of the BWM convention and sediments
• All topics
• The experience of the other countries and organizations
• Report from IMO
• IMO overview presentations

13. Are there any topics which should be added?
• (STAP) state practice cases
• More summary info about D2 Discharge standard REWS. Would be helpful to move convention toward BWM vs. BW exchange
• A representative for shore-based treatments could have been a good addition.

14. Do you consider that the objective of the event was met?

15. Are you likely to use the information you gained on the course when you return to your work?
16. Will you have the opportunity to transfer the knowledge gained to your colleagues at work?

General Comments:

- Excellent workshop
- There is a lot to do with regard to the information in BW. In order to come to ratification of the convention by my country. This workshop has contributed to my knowledge and will help to set the next step to phase out evasive species from the Caribbean region.
- The material should be available in both English and Spanish language
- The transportation from the airport to hotel had some problems.
- Very good water (potable) which sometimes is an issue in this type of activities.
- This is my first BWM Convention workshop, it has been an eye opener for me, information gained will be passed on to my coworkers in particular on Ballast Water (exchange), IAS, HAOP, hull foulings and USCG BWM programme.
- This conference was of great importance as it gives me a greater understanding of the BWM and would allow me to relate to my colleagues at work and get them to appreciate the BWM.
- BWM is of great importance to my state with a primarily tourism based economy. Having primarily Port State Control concerns, we have less constraints and/or opposition ro forwarding national legislation. My greatest challenge will always be making it part of the national agenda. Environmental impact is likely to be the greatest motivation for St. Lucia.
- I feel that meetings such as this should include representatives of the very people the strategic action plan/regulations etc is trying to regulate - i.e. ship owners/ operators. Perhaps the views presented in this meeting would reflect largely that of regulators and scientists, but less on ship owners/ operators point of view. Having said that, I believe there are many experienced seafarers participating in the meeting.
- The workshop was very enlightening on the main issues discussed
- I would recommend to start the workshop on the first day after the morning session. The information should meet the needs directly.
Annex 6 – Course Certificate

Regional Activity Center/ Regional Marine Pollution Emergency
Information and Training Center - Caribbean (RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe)

Certifies that

__________________________

has participated in the

Regional Workshop on Ballast Water Management
Panama City, Panama
June 5-9, 2017

Under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations Environmental Program, with the support from The Malaysian Government, Ministry of Transport and The Government of Panama, Panama Maritime Authority and assistance from: United States Coast Guard; Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, and the Panama Canal Authority

Commander Keith M. Dunhue, USCG
Seconded as a Consultant to IMO
RAC /REMPEITC- Caribe

Hing Lee Siang, Ph.D.
School of Marine and Environmental Sciences
University Malaysia Terengganu

Mr. Markus Helewski
Technical Officer
International Maritime Organization
Regional Strategy and Action Plan to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, Wider Caribbean Region

13 June 2017 Revision
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>BWM</td>
<td>Ballast Water Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAR/RCU</td>
<td>Caribbean Regional Co-ordinating Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>CME</td>
<td>Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHM</td>
<td>Clearinghouse Mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMISC</td>
<td>Caribbean Marine Invasive Species Clearinghouse Mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>COCATRAM</td>
<td>Comision Centroamericana de Transporte Maritimo</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIMS</td>
<td>Environmental Information Management System</td>
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<td>GBP</td>
<td>GEF/UNDP/IMO GloBallast Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAOP</td>
<td>Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens</td>
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<td>IAS</td>
<td>Invasive Alien Species</td>
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<td>IMO</td>
<td>International Maritime Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>LPIA</td>
<td>Legal, Policy and Institutional Aspects</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTF</td>
<td>National Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>PBA</td>
<td>Port Biological Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>PBBS</td>
<td>Port Biological Baseline Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe</td>
<td>Regional Activity Centre / Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre for the Wider Caribbean Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTF-WCR</td>
<td>Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Strategy and Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSC</td>
<td>Ballast Water and Sediment Scientific Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Region:

The area covered by the Cartagena Convention, known as the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR), is comprised of over thirty six (36) members including island nations, continental nations, overseas departments and territories of France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States of America (USA). This SAP covers the WCR, defined by the Cartagena Convention as the marine environment of the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea and the areas of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent thereto, south of 30 degrees north latitude and within 200 nautical miles of the Atlantic coasts of Territories and States pertaining to the following Countries: Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America and Venezuela. In addition, the SAP also covers El Salvador.

Enclosed by continental North America, Central America, South America, the Antillean Islands and The Bahamas (Lucayan) Archipelago, the Nations and States of the WCR are closely linked by the Caribbean Sea, the Yucatan Channel and the Gulf of Mexico. The Caribbean Current moves water into the southeastern corner of the Region from the Atlantic through passages between in the Lesser Antilles. Once in the Caribbean, surface currents move in a general counterclockwise circulation through the Yucatan channel and up into the Gulf of Mexico. On the western border of the WCR, the Panama Canal cuts through Central America enabling vessels to pass through the Region to and from the Pacific Ocean.

The WCR, due to its strategic location, is an active region of the world economy and a major hub for commercial shipping. Fisheries (both major industrial fisheries and artisanal fisheries) and coastal tourism (e.g. diving) are two of the major sources of income for many of the countries of the WCR. The coastal waters of the WCR contain biologically diverse (with many endemic species) and highly productive ecosystems that support both industries. These sensitive ecosystems provide an important livelihood for many coastal communities.

Due, amongst other factors, to the presence of the Panama Canal, the maritime traffic in the WCR is important, and the region has numerous busy ports. There is also a significant offshore oil industry in the region (e.g. Gulf of Mexico), and about one third of the world oil production originates or passes through the WCR. The Region hosts a high number of ship movements related to global container transport, as well as small scale transportation related to the supply of the remote island States. Because of this strategic location, with regards to the shipping routes of the main container lines, as well as the variety of other trade routes, a number of transshipment ports have also developed. The WCR also hosts some of the world’s major oil and gas reserves, including those of the Gulf of Mexico and Venezuela, and is a maritime transit region for oil imports to the USA. Additionally, the region is the world’s primary cruise destination, with most of those cruises starting their journey in the USA.

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4 RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, Analysis of WCR shipping data from LLI data, August 2017.
2016, over 112,500 calls were made by ships to ports and anchorages in the WCR excluding the USA which receives approximately 100,000 additional ship arrivals per year. Of the 112,500 calls into the WCR, sixty percent (60%) were conventional merchant cargo vessels such as container ships, general cargo, bulk carriers and tankers; and about fifteen percent (15%) passenger ships, with approximately 9,600 calls attributed to cruise ships.

All countries in the WCR are Member States of the IMO and generally have a strong history of ratifying IMO Conventions, with a common interest in the protection of the marine environment. They all have shown great concern with respect to the threats that human activities bring to the world ocean, particularly the biological invasions induced by shipping activities.

The Threat:

The issue of aquatic invasive species, including the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens (HAOP) in ships’ ballast water and sediments, has been identified by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as one of the greatest threats to global marine biodiversity and ecosystems (along with land-based sources of pollution, habitat loss and overfishing), and is also a significant threat to coastal economies and even public health. Global economic impacts from invasive alien species, including disruption to fisheries, fouling of coastal industry and infrastructure and interference with human amenities, are estimated to exceed tens of billions of dollars per year. The impacts are set to increase in coming years: indeed, unlike oil spills, there is certain latency before noticing the presence and effects of an invasive alien species. Additionally, this type of pollution is almost always irreversible: once they have become established in a new environment, it is virtually impossible to control or eradicate invasive marine species.

Moreover, as globalization of the world economy and the associated trade is continuing further, the commerce of goods and commodities relies more and more on shipping, which in turn is likely to accelerate the rate of transfer of potential HAOP. Countries in the WCR are at particular risk, as new markets, and therefore new ports and shipping routes, are created. Many ports in the region export bulk commodities and oil and, in return, receive large amounts of ballast water. Furthermore, many of the countries of the WCR are islands and rely largely on shipping to import necessary goods. A large amount of ballast water is thus transferred in the WCR and hence the marine environment in the region is exposed to the arrival of potential HAOP. The risk of marine bio-invasions, and their possible long-lasting implications on the ecosystems and their biodiversity, but also on human health and economy, is therefore extremely important, and the WCR was thus designated as one of the top priority regions during the second phase of the 10-year (2007-2017) GloBallast Programme, a joint program between the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Maritime Organization (IMO). The implementation of the IMO /GEF /UNDP GloBallast Partnerships project (Building Partnerships to Assist Developing Countries to Reduce the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms in Ships’ Ballast Water) was initiated in 2007.

The consequences of these invasions could include:
- **Ecosystem changes**: The original species composition and/or ecological processes may be altered by the introduction of alien (invasive) specie(s).
- **Economic impacts**: Fisheries, tourism (including diving) and coastal industry and other commercial activities and resources may be disrupted by the invading specie(s), resulting in loss of revenue and/or removal costs.
- **Public health impacts**: People may fall ill or even die from consumption of, or direct exposure to toxic organisms, diseases and pathogens introduced through ballast water.

Globalization has brought great changes to shipping in the WCR. Ships are becoming bigger and faster, which means that more ballast water is carried by ships from and to the countries in a shorter time, giving unwanted stowaways more chances to survive. Furthermore, environmental concerns, especially marine, are trans-boundary. Any environmental problem within any part of the WCR can no longer be considered as an isolated or localized incident, but rather as a matter with potentially far-reaching ecological and socioeconomic implications. In this regard, the spreading of the Indo-Pacific Lionfish in the WCR should be noted.

While there is still great need for additional baseline biological assessments, as well as increased coordination of monitoring activities, there are already 116 documented marine invasive species in the WCR, of which 86 may be attributed to ships’ ballast water or hull fouling.\(^5\),\(^6\) Some of these organisms are new to the region, some are long established, some are widespread and others are not.

### The Convention:

IMO and the maritime industry have been working extensively on the issue of species introduction through ships’ ballast water since the 1980s, initially developing voluntary guidelines that were adopted in 1994, and then in developing a legally binding international regime. In February 2004, the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention) was adopted by IMO.

The BWM Convention provides international standards for the management of ballast water on ships by requiring ships to remove, render harmless, or avoid the uptake or discharge of aquatic organisms. The Convention requires all ships in international trade to manage their ballast water and sediments to certain standards, according to a ship-specific ballast water management plan. Under the BWM Convention, ships are also required to carry a ballast water record book and an International Ballast Water Management Certificate. Over a period of time, most ships will have to phase into use on-board systems to treat ballast water and eliminate unwanted organisms to performance standard. In addition to the Convention, IMO has worked extensively with the development of guidelines for the uniform implementation of the Convention and to address concerns of various stakeholders, such as with regards to the availability of ballast water management systems and their type approval and testing. To date, more than 60 systems have been type-approved in accordance with process identified by IMO.

\(^5\) Haydar et al., *NEMESIS*, 2012
\(^6\) Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, *Status / Patterns of Ballast Water Management and Species Invasions in the Wider Caribbean Region*; National Ballast Information Clearinghouse,
The BWM Convention entered into force on September 8, 2017 with sixty five Contracting Governments, representing 73.92% of the Worlds Shipping Tonnage, ratifying the Convention. Twelve (12) of the sixty three contracting parties represent States of the WCR (Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, France, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago).

Additionally, while not party to the International BWM Convention, the United States has also implemented a mandatory BWM program through the U.S. Coast Guard BWM that incorporated the same ballast water discharge standards as IMO. While the total tonnage of ships registered under these twelve (12) countries represent approximately 25.51% of the worlds shipping fleet, history has shown, that there is often a great lapse in time between ratification and actual implementation of IMO Conventions in throughout WCR. Therefore, as it may take many years or decades to fully implement the BWM Convention throughout the WCR, there is a need and a desire to ensure a consistent harmonized approach to BWM is in place, and the States of the WCR endeavor to cooperate in toward such harmonization.

The Regional Strategy:

In August 2007, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe was approved as a Regional Coordinating Organization (RCO) for the WCR under the second phase of the GloBallast Program (the GloBallast Partnership Program) that was initiated in 2005. In December 7-9 2009, the First GloBallast Regional Task Force Meeting was convened by RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, within the framework of the GloBallast Partnerships, in Panama City, Panama. The meeting was organized in collaboration with the Caribbean Regional Coordination Unit of United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP-CAR/RCU) and the Central American Commission of Maritime Transport (COCATRAM), and with support of the Panama Maritime Authority. During this First GloBallast Regional Task Force Meeting, the Terms of Reference for the establishment of a Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region (RTF-WCR) were discussed and adopted by the delegates. RTF-WCR was established to include the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Venezuela and El Salvador. The meeting participants also discussed the Regional Strategy to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region (RTF-WCR) were discussed and adopted by the delegates. RTF-WCR was established to include the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Venezuela and El Salvador. The meeting participants also discussed the Regional Strategy to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region (RTF-WCR) were discussed and adopted by the delegates. RTF-WCR was established to include the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Venezuela and El Salvador. The meeting participants also discussed the Regional Strategy to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region (RTF-WCR) were discussed and adopted by the delegates. RTF-WCR was established to include the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Venezuela and El Salvador. The meeting participants also discussed the Regional Strategy to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in ships' Ballast Water and Sediments and established a draft document. A work plan was also established. The final report of this first meeting and its Annexes were presented for endorsement at the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe 5th Ordinary Steering Committee meeting, held in Curacao, May 11-12, 2010; and at the Fourteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Eleventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, that was held in Montego, held in Jamaica from 6-9 October 2010.

The Regional Strategy was first reviewed and amended at a two-day Second Regional Task Force Meeting on the Ratification and Implementation of the IMO Convention on Ballast Water Management (BWM) that was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 17-18

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April 2012. The result of the second RTF-WCR meeting was that the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) was developed and finalized, adopted by the RTF-WCR, and forwarded to the regional focal points for endorsement. The final version of the SAP was presented to the 6th Ordinary Steering Committee (OSC) Meeting of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe on 10 May 2012, and endorsed by the 15th IGM for the Cartagena Convention that was held in Punta Cana, La Altagracia, Dominican Republic, on October 25-27, 2012.

The revised 2012 Strategic Action Plan (SAP) sought to provide a regional framework for the activities needed to be developed and implemented within the WCR in order to:

- mitigate, minimize and eventually eliminate the transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens (HAOP) in ships' ballast water, in accordance with the BWM Convention and relevant programs such as the GEF/UNDP/IMO GloBallast Partnerships project (GBP);
- enhance regional cooperation and capacity in BWM matters towards the protection and conservation of the marine environment in the WCR using the existing regional bodies;
- encourage the accession to the BWM Convention by IMO Member States; and
- facilitate the harmonized implementation of effective ballast water management strategies and policies within the Region.

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2. OBJECTIVES OF THE WCR STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN (SAP)

The overall objectives of this regional SAP are:

- To provide a regional framework for the activities that need to be developed and implemented within the WCR in order to mitigate, minimize and eventually eliminate the transfer of HAOP in ships' ballast water, in accordance with the BWM Convention and relevant programmes.
- To enhance regional cooperation and capacity in BWM matters towards the protection and conservation of the marine environment in the WCR using the existing regional bodies; and,
- Encourage the continued accession to the BWM Convention and facilitate the harmonized implementation of effective ballast water management strategies and policies throughout the WCR.

The specific objectives of the revised SAP are to:

- Ensure effective co-ordination and support of the ballast water related activities through the establishment of an adequate institutional framework;
- Increase awareness on the potential dangers associated with the transfer of HAOP, notably through ballast water;
- Continue building capacity and providing training to address ballast water management matters at the regional and national levels;
- Develop and implement regional and country specific programmes to identify sensitive areas and activities that may be at risk from marine bio-invasions, and ensure their protection;
- Facilitate the necessary regional coordination and co-operation required for the development of legal, policy and institutional arrangements at the national level to address the issue of ballast water, including the promotion of the accession to the BWM Convention;
- Develop and implement compliance monitoring and enforcement programmes to ensure the successful implementation of the BWM Convention;
- Encourage regional co-operation to ensure harmonized implementation of the standardized regime for ballast water management; and,
- Identify any opportunities for self-financing of ballast water related activities to ensure sustainable implementation of the international requirements and the protection of the coastal and marine resources at the regional level.
- Identify other regional programs and activities with similar goals to marry up for joint activities and initiatives.
3. WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**Strategic Priority 1:** Commit to the implementation of international instruments developed to minimize the introduction of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens in the WCR

Growing recognition of the impacts of invasive species has led to a widespread response to the issue, in the form of legal instruments as well as programmes aimed at developing practical, technical solutions.

IMO Member States have adopted, the *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments* (BWM Convention), which provides a new international legal regime to address the threat of HAOP. With the adoption of the BWM Convention by consensus at IMO, all countries of the WCR are encouraged to accede to the Convention as early as possible, and to adopt the necessary measures of the provisions of the Convention, and IMO guidelines and resolutions, to ensure the incorporation of the BWM Convention into national legislation.

Countries which have not done so already, will need to carry out, at the national level, a review of the existing legal and policy framework related to ballast water management, so that any new regulations or legislation on this matter will comply with the BWM Convention and are of course not unconstitutional.

Countries in the WCR support the work for the minimization of the introduction of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens being carried out by the relevant organizations and forums, inclusive of but not limited to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols and the work of the IMO, and are encouraged to take all appropriate actions toward accession to the BWM Convention, which entered into force on September 8, 2017, and implementation thereof.

**Strategic Priority 2:** Develop an information exchange network

The exchange of information related to ballast water management issues among the countries of the WCR, which is timely and easily accessible, is essential to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the BWM Convention in the region. This can be best achieved by the use of an information exchange network in the WCR. This network will facilitate communications with and between countries, as well as function as a clearinghouse mechanism (CHM) for data and ballast water management related information within the region. The network will also ensure appropriate linkages with other regions and international programmes involved with ballast water management issues.

CHM is an electronic information network of countries in the WCR working together to facilitate implementation of the WCR Strategy and Action Plan. It is a mechanism to facilitate
access to and exchange of information on HAOP and IAS in the WCR. CHM is compatible with different levels of national capacity; needs-driven; provides access to information; supports decision-making; has no vested interest in controlling the expertise or information; and is created for the mutual benefit of all participants.

The CHM will be based with RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe. Long-term personnel support for RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe to establish and maintain the CHM should be sought.

*Countries in the WCR are committed to the establishment of the Caribbean Marine Invasive Species Clearinghouse Mechanism (CMISC) as an information exchange network for the WCR*

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**Strategic Priority 3:** Maintain and enhance capacity-building activities and initiatives in the WCR

The BWM Convention provides a new international legal regime to address the threat of HAOP. In article 13, the BWM Convention requires Parties with common interests to protect the environment, human health, property and resources in a given geographical area. It also calls for the provision of technical assistance to train personnel, initiating joint research and development programs and undertaking action aimed at the effective implementation of the instrument.

A pre-requisite for any successful program is to identify all stakeholders and bring them to a common platform in terms of developing the preliminary skill-base to deal with BWM matters and bio-invasions in general, with the view to facilitating discussion among the various stakeholders in each country and in the region. Several activities contained in this strategy address training and capacity building issues with respect to specific areas of BWM.

Under the GloBallast Partnerships project, a number of important activities and initiatives have been undertaken in the Caribbean region, which significantly helped develop and strengthen the expertise within the region and the capacity of the countries of the WCR in the field of ballast water management. However, the GloBallast Programme came to an end in June 2017.

*Countries in the WCR agree to continue efforts made in the region to enhance capacity building, knowledge transfer and training of personnel and to involve relevant international and regional co-operation mechanisms, non-governmental organizations, and agencies for the continuation of the process initiated.*
Strategic Priority 4: Develop knowledge on the environmental condition of the Seas of the WCR and invasive alien species introduced by ships

The development and updating of knowledge in the field of invasive alien species introduced by ships in the WCR is fundamental in order to have a sound scientific, technical and legal basis as a solid basis for management measures.

Effort must be made to compile relevant data and enhance knowledge on the above issues. These efforts need to be strengthened with comprehensive species inventories, data on species present in ports and data related to maritime traffic in the region, as well as relevant oceanographic data. The compilation of comprehensive species inventories for individual ports plays a significant role in ballast water management. For a port to effectively manage the ballast water associated with its shipping movements, data must be available and complete from the local port as well as from the source ports for the ballast water being received.

A port baseline survey is considered vital for assessing existing natural conditions and the presence or absence of introduced marine species. Such surveys should be conducted in accordance with internationally adopted protocols / guidelines, including the CRIMP Protocol and GloBallast Monograph Series No. 22: Guidance on Port Biological Baseline Studies, and should be conducted on an ongoing basis as a long-term biological monitoring programme for each port in the WCR, as appropriate. This will allow any introduction to be tracked and managed, and any new introductions to be detected.

Countries in the WCR agree to promote individually or through bi-lateral or regional co-operation, research and development programs in the field of invasive alien species and ships’ ballast water management, as means to enhance knowledge and assist in the establishment of scientific grounds on which best measures on controlling the transfer of invasive alien species can be based. The countries also agree that results of such scientific work (i.e. species and another for port biological assessment) should be entered into standardized databases (e.g. as developed through academic institutions and scientific organizations) and made available to all interested parties via the Clearinghouse Mechanism established in this SAP.

Strategic Priority 5: Use risk assessment as a useful tool to assist in ballast water management decision-making and in compliance, monitoring and enforcement procedures
**Risk assessment and ballast water management.** Risk assessment can be helpful in ensuring that the provisions of the BWM Convention are applied in a consistent manner, based on scientifically robust groundwork. In particular, the IMO has developed guidelines for the implementation of the BWM Convention under which risk assessment is needed. The Guidelines on Designation of Areas for Ballast Water Exchange (G14) are of particular relevance for the WCR, as it addresses the sea areas where a vessel cannot exchange its ballast water and where the port State may designate areas, in consultation with adjacent or other States, where a ship may conduct ballast water exchange. The IMO also recommends carrying out risk assessment when a Party, within waters under its jurisdiction, is granting exemptions to ships. Guidelines for Risk Assessment under Regulation A4 of the BWM Convention (G7) and GloBallast Monograph 21: Identifying and Managing Risks from Organisms Carried in Ships’ Ballast Water provide information on risk assessments.

Risk assessment is also essential to have a sound knowledge of the overall risks for introduction of invasive alien species associated with the maritime traffic in the WCR. When resources are limited, management actions such as compliance, monitoring and enforcement (CME) maybe prioritized according to the higher risk areas or vessels.

**Biological invasion of ports.** Major shipping ports are often the first places where invasive alien species are introduced and become established. Port Biological Baseline Surveys (PBBS) are used to develop a baseline list of species – both native and non-native – that are present in a shipping port. Subsequent long-term monitoring regimes should be put in place to continue building an information database in this field and detect any new invasions. This data can be used to communicate risks to other shipping ports or countries, as appropriate, and provide an essential reference point for management of non-native species. As they target marine pests, PBBS can also help raise awareness of marine pest issues within the region. Most importantly, they allow any existing introductions to be recorded, tracked, and managed. GloBallast Monograph 22: Guidance on Port Biological Baseline Surveys is a useful tool.

**Ports at risk of biologic invasion.** Some ports in the WCR are more at risk of biological invasion as they are ports receiving greater volumes of ballast water originating from ports located outside the region. It should be noted that once a harmful species is introduced in one port located in the WCR, there is a risk of secondary introduction of other ports located within the region.

To facilitate effective ballast water management, each country needs to know the level and types of risks of introductions that its ports may face, as well as the most sensitive resources and values that might be threatened. Risk assessments at the national/port level can function as a useful tool for such management, given that adequate background information is available.

Risk Assessment could also be used by countries to effectively manage resources in order to make progress on multiple fronts for implementing the convention. For instance, a country may have ten ports in need of a PBBS, however, only two deal in large quantities of ballast water. PBBS could be conducted on those two only, in the first instance, the others being reserved for a later date.
A regional-level risk assessment could be also used to identify the priority ports for detailed risk assessment and explore potential for the same risk area (SRA) agreed upon at IMO MEPC 70.

**Countries in the WCR consider risk assessments at national, sub-regional or regional level, as an appropriate tool to guide ballast water management measures and are committed to establish surveys and monitoring programmes including reporting and alert mechanisms.**

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**Strategic Priority 6:** Decide upon a harmonized regional ballast water management regime in the WCR and ensure sub-regional and national strategies are in line with these.

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Given the transboundary nature of invasive alien species issue, it must be recognized that individual countries cannot effectively address this concern on their own. A harmonized regional ballast water management regime has to be agreed upon by the coastal States of the WCR, which takes into account the maritime traffic lanes in the region and the origin and distribution of ballast water in the ports of the region, as well as the particular geographical constraints of the area and associated scientific and oceanographic data.

Harmonized procedures and guidelines for ballast water management and a compliance monitoring and enforcement (CME) system should be implemented by all countries of the region. Sub-regional approaches within the WCR area are encouraged also and existing sub-regional agreements in the WCR should consider integrating BWM issues in their work, in coherence with the regional approach adopted. National strategies established by coastal States in the WCR should take into account and be consistent with the policy and arrangements agreed upon at sub-regional and regional levels.

**Countries in the WCR agree to work collaboratively to adopt regional arrangements concerning ballast water management in the WCR, consistent with the requirements and standards set out in the BWM Convention.**

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**Strategic Priority 7:** Regional cooperation and consideration of other regional seas strategies and initiatives.

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A key objective of this SAP is to achieve regional coordination in the WCR and to harmonize the implementation of national and regional BWM strategies in line with the BWM Convention. Regional cooperation is also necessary for the continuous and joint progress of all the countries of the WCR. All countries are thus encouraged to disseminate, during regional activities or through existing regional bodies (e.g. UNEP CAR/RCU, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe), the lessons learned at the national level during the implementation of a BWM regime.

The Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region and El Salvador (RTF-WCR) created within the
GloBallast Partnerships project will help to facilitate the process as well as to establish linkages with other regions.

Harmonization of approaches to ballast water management across regional seas is essential to help achieve the goals of the BWM Convention. Communication and alignment with neighboring and other regions and their BWM structures is needed to ensure consistency between the regimes, and also to promote sharing of information between these interlinked marine regions.

**Countries in the WCR are committed to achieve regional coordination in the WCR, to harmonize the implementation of national and regional BWM Strategies in line with the BWM Convention and to enhance and maintain cooperation with the neighboring regions of the WCR and with other relevant regional agreements, both within and outside of the WCR, in order to ensure that the measures adopted are consistent with other ballast water management regional arrangements.**

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**Strategic Priority 8:** Promote measures to increase compliance and encourage and support general public awareness initiatives

The dangers of uncontrolled discharges of ballast water, as well as the BWM Convention, may not be well known at the national and regional levels.

**Countries in the WCR are committed to instructing the maritime community for compliance and encouraging and supporting general public awareness initiatives**

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**Strategic Priority 9:** Implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan

The RTF-WCR was initially created within the GloBallast Partnerships project, and tasked, *inter alia*, to develop and adopt a Regional Strategy as well as an Action Plan for its implementation. But while the GloBallast Partnerships Project has since ended in June 2017, the International Ballast Water Convention has just entered into force on September 8, 2017 with ratification by twelve (12) of the WCR Nations (Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, France, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Panama, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago). Therefore, it is important to BWM in the region that the RTF-WCR continues to operate with the same mandate in order to assist with the further ratification and full implementation of this Convention throughout the WCR. The RTF-WCR is well placed to continue to be the driving force for the implementation of the Regional Strategy, and the Cartagena Convention provides an appropriate legal framework to continue channeling efforts at the regional level in the WCR. Additionally, if properly staffed, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe should continue to function as a Regional Coordinating Organization in the WCR, and Secretariat of the RTF-WCR, thereby helping countries in the region to establish ballast water management policies in order to decrease the risk of marine bio-invasions. As such, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe has a key role to play, both regionally and nationally in the development of measures for the control and management of ship's ballast water and...
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Sediments in the WCR. RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe can continue to facilitate a more comprehensive participation and longevity for BWM initiatives in the WCR.

Implementation of the SAP must also take into consideration the involvement of regional bodies such as:

- Caribbean MoU;
- CARICOM
- Inter-American Committee on Ports;
- COCATRAM, ROCRAM and ROCRAM-CA;
- United States Coast Guard (USCG); and,
- Viña del Mar MoU.

A Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee should be established and provide advice to the RTF-WCR as appropriate, including on matters such as the correct Protocol to be used for PBBS in the WCR.

Countries in the WCR consider that RTF-WCR is an important supporting regional mechanism for the implementation of the SAP and it continues to operate with its original mandate, supported by RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe and a Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee, taking into consideration regional bodies relevant to its work.

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**Strategic Priority 10:** Keep the Strategy and Action Plan under review and assess their implementation progress

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The SAP should be subject to annual periodic review to take into account emerging issues, outcomes of research and development (R&D) activities and experience gained from its operation and implementation.

Periodic gatherings of representatives of the regional coordinating mechanism and Secretariats should be arranged to assess progress with implementation of the various regional strategies and arrangements and facilitate reaching a harmonized approach at the global level.

Countries in the WCR will meet regularly as appropriate, including the use of online forums, with the purpose of reviewing and evaluating the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of the SAP, and agree that the work accomplished in the various regional seas regarding the management of ballast water and sediments is on the agenda of meetings and forums gathering the various regional Secretariats and agreements.
Strategic Priority 11: Identify, and where applicable source, adequate resources to implement activities under the SAP

Recognizing that budgetary resources provided through multilateral and bilateral donors are not infinite, one of the objectives of this SAP is to identify various opportunities for self-financing of theballast water related activities beyond the external intervention.

Since the development of self-financing mechanisms will largely be handled at the national level, the RTF-WCR shall aid the review of opportunities for self-financing of the activities related to ballast water management to the extent possible. The RTF-WCR will evaluate any opportunities for ongoing resource mobilization, contributions, collaborations or co-financing in order to help sustain ballast water management activities in the long-term.

The long-term objective of Countries in the Wider Caribbean Region is to ensure the sustainability and continuity of BWM related activities from self-financing sources.

Strategic Priority 12: Seek long-term personnel support for RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe

The Regional Activity Centre/Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre in Wider Caribbean Region (RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe) was established on June 15th 1995 within the framework of the United Nations Environment Program - Regional Coordinating Unit for the Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CAR/RCU) and through the collaborative efforts of the governments of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) following a request by the Contracting Parties of the Cartagena Convention. RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe was established to strengthen regional preparedness and response capacity and to foster and facilitate cooperation and mutual assistance in the cases of emergency (MOU Establishing RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, 1996). The mission of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe has greatly expanded over the years to include assisting countries to implement all major IMO marine pollution instruments including the BWM Convention. Since 2007, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe has been providing training, hosting workshops, serving as a regional hub of marine environmental best practices and fulfilling its mission to address gaps in the implementation of international conventions throughout the Wider Caribbean Region.

As the Secretariat of the RTF-WCR and the Regional Coordinating Organization, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe has assisted developing countries of the WCR over the years with ratifying and implementing the International BWM Convention in order to decrease the risk of marine bio-invasions. As such, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe has played a key role in the WCR, both regionally and nationally, in helping to implement measures to control and manage ships' ballast water and sediments in accordance with the BWM Convention. As the BWM
Convention entered into force on 8 September 2017, and the GloBallast Partnerships Project ended in June 2017, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe will need to continue to facilitate a more comprehensive participation and longevity for BWM initiatives and coordination in the WCR through IMO's Technical Cooperation Division.

Countries of the WCR confirm the need for RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, having benefitted from the numerous capacity-building activities and initiatives over the years and noting the important advocacy role played by the Centre in catalyzing cooperation between the Caribbean States with regard to the BWM Convention, and agree that future resourcing of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe should be undertaken by the countries of the Caribbean, given the important contribution of the Centre to the region, with a firm commitment to identify additional consultants with the appropriate expertise for deployment as in-kind support to the Centre.
4. ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan for the implementation of the Regional Strategy on Ships’ Ballast Water Management identifies the main measures to be taken at regional level, sub-regional or national level in accordance with the Strategic Priorities, and includes a workplan/timetable for their implementation (SAP Appendix 1).

The actions outlined in this SAP are structured to initiate and help support ballast water and sediment management measures throughout the region in a manner that is sustainable and consistent with international regimes and domestic legislations.

**Action 1:** Accede to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments 2004 (BWM Convention)

Accession to the BWM Convention is urged in order that the treatment standards for ballast water discharges become required for all applicable ships operating in the WCR. To help the process at national level, national policy initiatives preparing the ground and leading to accession should be undertaken.

An important step in achieving the proposed objectives of the SAP will be the creation of National Task Forces (NTF) including the major stakeholders in BWM, taking into consideration the IMO related guidelines. The NTF in each of the participating countries will develop their National Action Plan for BWM with the support of the RTF-WCR, including the provision of templates through the GloBallast Programme and other related programs or projects as appropriate.

Countries of the region are encouraged to utilize GloBallast Monographs 17-23 as guidelines, for example when developing and implementing national economic assessments, legal reviews and strategic assessments, towards accession and implementation of the BWM Convention, as relevant.

Countries in the WCR, agree:

- **a)** to form a national task force to lead the process towards accession to the BWM Convention;
- **b)** to develop national legislation to give effect to the BWM Convention by providing, inter alia, penalties for violators as well as regulations which would set out technical arrangements for its enforcement.
- **c)** to use material from the GloBallast Programme, including the model legislation where appropriate, and lead partner countries as aids in the process.
**Action 2: Establishing a web-based WCR clearinghouse mechanism**

To facilitate information exchange related to ballast water management issues among the Contracting Parties, an information exchange network is considered necessary in the WCR. This network will facilitate communications with and between countries, and function as a clearinghouse mechanism (CHM) for data and ballast water management related information within the WCR. The importance of this Action is paramount to the execution of this SAP as it will directly impact the successful implementation and accomplishment of the following Strategic Priorities and Actions:

- **Strategic Priority 2:** Develop an Information exchange network
- **Strategic Priority 3:** Maintain and enhance capacity-building activities and initiatives in the WCR
- **Strategic Priority 4:** Develop knowledge on the environmental condition of the Seas of the WCR and invasive alien species introduced by ships.
- **Strategic Priority 5:** Use risk assessment as a useful tool to assist in ballast water management decision-making and in compliance, monitoring and enforcement procedures
- **Strategic Priority 8:** Instruct the maritime community for compliance and encourage and support general public awareness initiatives; and
- **Strategic Priority 9:** Implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan

**Countries in the WCR, agree to establish a Caribbean Marine Invasive Species Clearinghouse Mechanism (CMISC) that will incorporate the following:**

- **a) A WCR Invasive Species Database Portal (ISP):** Liaison with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center to adapt the framework of the National Exotic Marine and Estuarine Species Information System (NEMESIS) for the WCR. The portal will provide contact information of national, regional and international institutions charged with collecting invasive species data; and provide direction, advice and encouragement on how to enter such data for the WCR into a single database.

- **b) Port Biological Monitoring (PBM) Portal:** Establish a portal that will foster collaborative efforts and connect institutions involved with Port Biological Monitoring throughout the Region to include: data and reports on all WCR Port Biological Assessments (PBBAs) Conducted in the WCR; procedures and technical assistance related material for conducting PBM, such as protocols and variations; links to National (per country) and regional Institutions conducting PBM and PBBAs; published works directly related to PBBAs and PBM; lessons learned, and best for
conducting PBBAs and PBM; and lists and links to related training material and training opportunities.

c) **Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee (SSC):** Establish a portal that will link Scientific Committee Members of the RTF-WCR and include: an online forum accessed through the Portal to facilitate the establishment of an online Scientific Committee Correspondence Group; a chat group/message system to enhance the exchange of communication; a list of committee members and their contact information; links to other sites and institutions providing scientific information related to BWM; links to published work related to BWM (other than PBBAs and PBM); and information on scientific seminars and workshops related to BWM.

d) **Open-Ended (Publicly Available) Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) Portal:** Establish a CME Open-ended Portal to include: guidelines for implementing the BWM Convention in the WCR; outreach material for Commercial and Maritime Industry personnel; links to IMO's Ballast Water Guidelines; links to environmentally safe Hull Cleaning and Antifouling Information; information on national, regional and international seminars and workshops related BWM, sediment management and hull fouling procedures; information on mariner training and guidance material related to implementing BWM, sediment management and hull fouling procedures; links to NGO and commercially available BWM Programs of major organizations (Nonprofit & commercial); Ballast and Sediment Treatment Technologies; Third party testing companies; Approved Ballast Water Treatment technologies; Ballast Water and Sediment Reception Facilities; and Industry technical guidance and best practice material.

e) **CME Closed-end (for SAP Country official use only) Portal:** Establish a CME Closed-ended Portal to include: means to receive information regarding ships' BWM practices at a central location, and transmit this information to the Port State's BWM regulatory authority; Port State guidance and best practices for examining ships' official log book or other records to ascertain compliance with BWM requirements of the Port State; guidance and best practices for obtaining ballast water and sediment samples and carrying out any necessary testing; means to determine compliance with the voluntary guidelines established in the SAP; lists of the legal provisions put in place by any WCR State for enforcing non-compliance with the required BWM requirements; means to ensure tracking of violations and exchange of experiences throughout the region; enforcement experience and best practices for determining compliance with the BWM Convention and the Voluntary Guidelines found in this SAP; Best Practices Towards National Accession & Implementation of the International BWM Convention; Documents and assessments completed by WCR countries (Bahamas, Jamaica, Colombia, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago) under the guidance of the GloBallast Partner Project for use as by other members of the RTF-WCR as examples; guidance, assistance and best practices for development and designation of national ballast water exchange zones; a Chat Room for the exchange of ballast water related implementation and enforcement communication between RTF-WCR Members; Means for tracking violations and identifying commonly found issues (possible inks to Port State Control MoU documents as appropriate); other material related to and relevant to the mutual exchange of information toward regional
ratification and implementation of the International BWM Convention by RTF-WCR members.

f) **Outreach Portal:** Establish a portal that will provide information to the general public of the WCR related raising awareness of the risks associated with introducing non-indigenous marine species preventing the transfer and spread of AIS and HAOPs from all vectors to include: translations and links to IMO GloBallast Public Awareness Material and other material (such as traveling displays, exhibits, pamphlets, AIS and HAOPs identification cards, fact sheets, and videos in different languages) for downloading and dissemination; and links to information on public seminars, training events, workshop, outreach events, articles and links to WCR National, Regional, and International Government and Non-Government Program news related to AIS and HAOPs awareness and prevention activities.

**Figure 1:** Components of a Caribbean Maritime Invasive Species Clearinghouse Mechanism (CMISC)
**Action 3:** Adopt guidelines for ballast water exchange and sediment management in the WCR

The seas of the WCR are semi enclosed and support fragile ecosystems upon which the economies of most of the countries of the region depend. The region is vulnerable to invasive alien species, including the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms. Countries of the WCR have a vested interest in the effective management and control of ships’ ballast water and sediments as quickly as possible using harmonized arrangements.

The harmonized arrangements are based on the relevant components and requirements of the BWM Convention. These arrangements do not prejudice the right of any Contracting Party to determine special requirements in certain areas under their jurisdiction, in conformity with international law.

The text of Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange and Sediment Management in The Wider Caribbean Region is given at Annex II.

**Countries in the WCR, agree:**

a) to adopt guidelines for ballast water exchange and sediment management in the Wider Caribbean Region; and

b) to notify all interested parties of the adoption guidelines for ballast water exchange and sediment management through notices to shipping and instructions to surveyors.

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**Action 4:** Enhance expertise; facilitate knowledge transfer and capacity building in the WCR

Given the absence of national legislation and technical initiatives related to ballast water and sediment management in several States of the WCR, an effective capacity building program should be established to assist in carrying out activities, which will assist in implementing the SAP. Capacity building activities should cover the following, as appropriate:

- identification of National Lead Agencies and relevant stakeholders for ballast water issues and formation of cross-sector / inter-ministerial working groups and committees;
- communication and awareness raising activities;
- port biota baseline surveys, monitoring and ballast water risk assessment;
- research and development projects;
- drafting of national ballast water legislation and regulations;
- compliance monitoring and enforcement;
- developing national ballast water management strategies and action plans;
- developing self-financing mechanisms; and
- channeling through RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe funding for projects and/or proposals for projects to be implemented regionally.

Training activities should be organized both at regional and sub-regional level taking into consideration similarities such as the geographical areas concerned, the language, the status of ratification etc. In addition, these training activities should be carried out using the "Train the Trainer approach" where appropriate and used by countries to replicate these training activities at national level. Such training will target all stakeholders, including but not limited to: Port State Control and Port Health Officers, environmental agencies and ship agents. It is therefore anticipated that each country will replicate the training programs at the national level. IMO and RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe will provide the relevant training package in the appropriate languages to requesting Countries and will look into the development of training packages to be delivered online.

**Countries in the Wider Caribbean Region, agree:**

a) to including training programs and other capacity-building activities in the regular program of work of the relevant regional activity centres of the WCR;

b) to seek and secure support, individually or through RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, from the IMO Technical Cooperation Division (TCD), or other international organizations for national, sub-regional or regional training courses and other capacity-building actions in support of activities of the Action Plan;

c) to disseminate protocols and tools for standardization of technical approaches that could be used to conduct regional and national activities;

d) that countries with specific expertise on ballast water management related activities help organize national, sub-regional or regional training sessions;

e) to replicate such training on a national level through the establishment of a national training program on ballast water management activities; and

f) to deliver an introductory training course on ballast water management, using the GloBallast training package, to decisions-makers of countries in the WCR.

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**Action 5:** Establish a survey, biological monitoring and risk assessment system for ports in the Wider Caribbean Region

The development of a uniform regional biological monitoring system for ports of the WCR is crucial to understanding the nature of what is being managed, and supporting the methods through which the management is implemented. The process of developing this system should be composed of the following elements:

- Collection of data (biological, physical, chemical) on port environments;
- Reviewing best practices, existing literature and approaches, in order to agree on common approaches/protocols;
- Identifying biological data requirements for proposed risk assessment and management measure (non-indigenous species, harmful species, and pathogens);
- Identifying long-term monitoring procedures (parameters, frequency);
- Reviewing existing monitoring programs, if any, to see if these meet common approaches/protocols;
- Preparing common implementation guidelines on Port Biological Baseline Surveys and Monitoring.

In some areas of the WCR, countries may identify sub-regional mechanisms for collaboration on surveys, monitoring and risk assessment.

**Countries in the WCR, agree:**

- a) to develop a regionally standardized biological sampling and monitoring protocol for use of countries of the WCR in building the necessary biological and environmental databases to support the IAS management objectives;
- b) to collaborate, preferably following sub-regional approaches where relevant, on biological survey and monitoring activities, including to promote and ensure sharing of technical capacity, resources and results;
- c) to seek institutional support at the national level to conduct port biological surveys and plans for monitoring, as part of their national strategy for ballast water and IAS management;
- d) to use a regional Clearinghouse Mechanism for sharing of data related to port surveys and ongoing biological monitoring; and
- e) that RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe engage with appropriate international and regional organisations for potential technical assistance and support;
- f) to establish a national contact point or contact points for receipt of applications for exemptions under regulation A-4 of the BWM Convention, and for consultation in accordance with regulation A-4.3 of the BWM Convention.

**Action 6:** Establish a Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee

A regional Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee should be established as a correspondence group to provide timely advice to the RTF-WCR on scientific matters related to the BWM Convention, as appropriate, including the Protocol to be used for PBBS.

The composition of the Committee and the identification of its members would be determined by the RTF-WCR.

**Countries in the Wider Caribbean Region, agree:**

- a) to the establishment of the Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee to advise on scientific matters related to the BWM Convention, as appropriate.
- b) that the RTF-WCR will determine the composition and identify the members of the Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee

**Action 7:** Establish a Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) system in the WCR
In association with the development and implementation of the harmonized regional ballast water management regime, a generic compliance and monitoring system (CME) needs to be developed to ensure compliance with the measures proposed within the regime. The CME system should incorporate the following, as appropriate:

- requirement for ships to collect and record information about their BWM practices (i.e. uptake, management en route and discharge);
- means for ships to transmit this information to the Port States' BWM regulatory authority, and to subsequently receive directions from them;
- provision for examination of the ships' official log books or other official records to ascertain compliance with the BWM requirements of the Port State;
- ability by the appropriate authority to obtain ballast water and sediment samples and carry out any necessary testing;
- legal provision for enforcement measures to be applied for non-compliance with the required BWM requirements, and provisions for applying sanctions to violations; and
- effective communication arrangements on a regional level to ensure proper tracking of violations and exchange of experience during the application of the CME system on a national level.

Countries in the WCR, agree:

a) to adapt their existing Port State Control & CME systems in accordance with the BWM Convention and its relevant Guidelines; and

b) to establish and maintain up-to-date a regional communication system within a clearinghouse mechanism, to allow exchange of experience and tracking of violations utilizing existing control agreements such as the Caribbean MoU, USCG and the Viña del Mar MoU on Port State Control.

**Action 8:** Enhance public awareness on ships’ ballast water and invasive alien species issues and promote measures that increase compliance from the maritime community.

With a view to alert general and targeted public to the risks associated with introducing non-indigenous marine species in the marine environment, and in this way add to the efforts towards preventing and controlling the introduction of invasive species into the WCR, coastal States and the maritime industry should involve themselves in endeavors to raise knowledge and awareness on the subject. General or specific awareness materials, according to the type of public targeted, are to be used when they exist, or be developed, preferably in the local language of their respective countries. Awareness materials already prepared by IMO-GloBallast are available including brochures, posters and other educational documents and tools. Where possible, collaborative partnerships will be forged between countries, and with NGO's and other public interest groups to aid in organizing targeted public awareness campaigns.

Countries in the WCR, agree:
a) to promote measures that increase compliance from the maritime community
b) to use IMO and GloBallast Public awareness materials and other materials including IMO Guidelines and Monographs, information from the Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee, and lessons learned from other countries, and translate these to local languages for dissemination at national level;
c) to carry out national seminars and workshops to raise awareness among the various stakeholders involved; and
d) to develop local case studies that may be used effectively for awareness and leveraging support within the WCR and its sub-regions.

Action 9: Incorporate the Strategy and Action Plan evaluation within the Cartagena Convention reporting system and procedure

The SAP is subject to periodic review to accommodate any developments on ballast water management at the regional or global level and adjusted / updated accordingly. The implementation of the SAP should be carried out under the coordination of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe as a continuation of the present efforts of the Centre devoted to enhance expertise in the region on ballast water management issues. RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe should be kept updated at least annually on the status of actions taken to implement national action plans for ballast water management and in addition, actions taken on a national level should be evaluated periodically under the Cartagena Convention to determine their effectiveness.

Countries in the WCR agree:

a) that RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe will coordinate and assist with the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan in the region;
b) that RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe will inform its meetings of Focal Points, which take place every two years, on the status of implementation of the SAP, for subsequent transmission to the Ordinary Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention; and
c) to provide RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe with the relevant information on national-based activities annually, and as they occur, with the purpose of reviewing and evaluating its ongoing relevance
5.  EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes from implementing the SAP will include:

- the increased public and political awareness and support for BWM approaches in the region;
- strong and continuing presence of ballast water management and control capacity in the region;
- reduction in the transfer of potentially harmful organisms to the region’s marine environment;
- adoption of harmonized national and regional approaches consistent with IMO recommendations including the accession to the BWM Convention;
- uniform application of regulations related to the BWM Convention;
- regional network of coordinated research and monitoring centres for ballast water transfers connected to a global network;
- increased level of protection and conservation of habitats and species of national, regional and global significance;
- protection of fisheries and aquaculture/mariculture activities in and around coastal areas;
- protection of other economic activities including tourism and other coastal industries;
- protection of infrastructure that may be threatened by HAOP;
- increased engagement of industry in the ballast water issue;
- increased levels of protection of human health;
- reduction of the loss of coastal biodiversity and degradation of coastal environments; and
- informed and effective participation in the ballast water management and control process at global level.
## WORK PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Workgroups &amp; Regional Leaders</th>
<th>Timeline for Action</th>
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</table>
| 1. Accede to the BWM Convention | a) Continue forming national task forces to lead the process towards the ratification of the BWM Convention;  
   b) Develop national legislation to give effect to the BWM Convention by providing, *inter alia*, penalties for violators as well as regulations which would set out technical arrangements for its enforcement;  
   c) Use material from the GloBallast Programme, and lessons learned from other WCR States as aids in the process. | All RTF-WCR members           | June 2018           |
<p>| 2. Establish a Caribbean Marine Invasive Species Clearinghouse Mechanism (CMISC) at the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe website with the following portals | a) Establish a WCR Invasive Species Portal (ISP): Liaison with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center to adapt the framework of the National Exotic Marine and Estuarine Species Information System (NEMESIS) for the WCR. The portal will provide contact information of national, regional and international institutions charged with collecting invasive species data; and provide direction, advice and encouragement on how to enter such data for the WCR into a single database. | ISP Sub-workgroup: - Panama - Trinidad and Tobago | Sept 2018 |
| | b) Establish a WCR Port Biological Monitoring (PBM) Portal to be linked to the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe website: The portal should: connect institutions involved with Port Biological Monitoring throughout the region to include: links to National Institutions, Regional and International institutions; List procedures and Technical Assistance for PBM including: protocols and variations; published works directly related to Port Biological Baseline Assessments (PBBAs); Lessons Learned, and Best Practices for conducting PBBAs; Links and links to related training and training opportunities. | PBMP Sub-workgroup: - Jamaica - Trinidad and Tobago - Dominican Republic | Sept 2018 |
| | c) Establish a Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee Portal to be linked to the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe website. The portal should: Link Scientific Committee Members, and include a list of committee member contacts; Links to other sites and institutions providing scientific information related to BWM; Support the establishment of a Correspondence Group to through an online Forum accessed through the Portal with chat group/message system capabilities to enhance communication; Link to published work related to BWM other than PBBAs; Provide information on scientific seminars and workshops | SC Sub-workgroup: - Colombia - Jamaica - Trinidad &amp; Tobago | Sept 2018 |
| | d) Open-ended Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) Portal to be linked to the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe website. The portal should include: Guidelines and outreach material (focused to governments and maritime industry personnel)for implementing the | Open Ended CME Sub-workgroup: - Dominican Republic | May 2018 |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>BWM Convention in the WCR; Links to IMO Ballast Water Guidelines; Environmentally safe Hull Cleaning and Antifouling Information on national, regional and international seminars &amp; maritime workshops related to BWM, Sediment Management &amp; Hull Antifouling; Information on mariner training/guidance; Industry Links to: BWM Programs of major organizations (Nonprofit &amp; commercial); Information on Ballast and Sediment Treatment Technologies including third party testing companies, lists of approved technologies; Reception Facilities and industry technical guidance</th>
<th>- possible assistance from maritime colleges/academies</th>
</tr>
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</table>
e) CME Closed-end (for SAP Country official use only) Portal: Establish a CME Closed-ended Portal to include: means to receive information regarding ships’ BWM practices at a central location, and transmit this information to the Port State’s BWM regulatory authority; Port State guidance and best practices for examining ships’ official log book or other records to ascertain compliance with BWM requirements of the Port State; guidance and best practices for obtaining ballast water and sediment samples and carrying out any necessary testing; means to determine compliance with the voluntary guidelines established in the SAP; lists of the legal provisions put in place by any WCR State for enforcing non-compliance with the required BWM requirements; means to ensure tracking of violations and exchange of experiences throughout the region; enforcement experience and best practices for determining compliance with the BWM Convention and the Voluntary Guidelines found in this SAP; Best Practices Towards National Accession & Implementation of the International BWM Convention; Documents and assessments completed by WCR countries (Bahamas, Jamaica, Colombia, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago) under the guidance of the GloBallast Partner Project for use as by other members of the RTF-WCR as examples; guidance, assistance and best practices for development and designation of national ballast water exchange zones; a Chat Room for the exchange of BW related implementation and enforcement communication between RTF-WCR Members; Means for tracking violations and identifying commonly found issues (possible inks to Port State Control MoU documents as appropriate); other material related to and relevant to the mutual exchange of information toward regional ratification and implementation of the International BWM Convention by RTF-WCR members. | Closed Ended CME Sub-workgroup Colombia and Jamaica May 2018 |
| 3. Adopt harmonized arrangements for ballast water exchange in the Wider Caribbean Region |
|---|---|---|
| a) Adopt harmonized voluntary arrangements for ballast water exchange in the Wider Caribbean Region (Annex II) |
| b) Notify all interested parties of the adoption of harmonized voluntary arrangements for ballast water exchange in the Wider Caribbean Region through notices to shipping and instructions to surveyors |
| Outreach Workgroup: Belize | May 2018 |

| 4. Enhance expertise; facilitate knowledge transfer and capacity building in the Wider Caribbean Region |
|---|---|---|
| a) Investigate the possibility of including training program and other capacity-building activities in the regular program of work of the relevant regional activity Centres of the WCR |
| b) Seek and secure support, individually or through RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, from the IMO Technical Cooperation Division (TCD), or other international organizations for national, sub-regional or regional training courses and other capacity-building actions in support of activities of the Action Plan |
| RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe | Jun 2019 |

<p>| 5. Establish a survey, biological monitoring and risk assessment |
|---|---|---|
| a) Develop a regionally standardized biological sampling and monitoring protocol for use of countries of the WCR in building the necessary biological and environmental databases to support the IAS management objectives |
| b) Collaborate, preferably following sub-regional approaches where relevant, on biological survey and monitoring activities, including to promote and ensure sharing of technical |
| PBMP Workgroup: | June 2019 |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Annex 7 Page 30</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>system for ports in the Wider Caribbean Region</strong></td>
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<td>capacity, resources and results</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Seek institutional support at the national level to conduct port biological surveys and plans for monitoring, as part of their national strategy for ballast water and IAS management</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Use a regional Clearing House Mechanism for sharing of data related to port surveys and ongoing biological monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe engage with appropriate international and regional organizations for potential technical assistance and support</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| 6. Establish a Scientific Committee |
| a) Establish a Scientific Committee to advise on scientific matters, as appropriate, including the Protocol to be used for PBBS and arrangements for ballast water exchange in the WCR | Scientific Committee Workgroup May 2018 |
| b) RTF-WCR determine the composition and identify the members of the Scientific Committee | Scientific Committee Workgroup Dec 2018 |

| 7. Establish a Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) system in the WCR |
| a) Adapt existing Port State Control & CME systems in accordance with the BWM Convention | All June 2019 |
| b) Establish and maintain up to-date a regional communication system within a CMI SC to allow exchange of experience and tracking of violations utilizing existing control agreements such as the Caribbean MoU, USCG and the Vina del Mar MoU on Port State Control | Close-ended CME Workgroup May 2018 |

| 8. Enhance public awareness on ships’ ballast water and invasive alien species issues |
| a) Use IMO GloBallast Public awareness materials and translated these to local languages for dissemination at national level | Outreach Workgroup RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe June 2019 |
| b) Carry out national seminars and workshops to raise awareness among the various stakeholders involved | All June 2019 |
| c) Develop local case studies that may be used effectively for awareness and leveraging support within the Wider Caribbean Region and its sub-regions | Outreach Workgroup June 2019 |

| 9. Incorporate the Strategy and Action Plan evaluation within the Cartagena Convention reporting system and procedure |
| a) coordinate and assist with the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan in the region; | RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe Feb 2019 |
| b) inform meetings of Focal Points, on the status of implementation of the SAP, for subsequent transmission to the Ordinary Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention; and | RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe June 2019 (Every 2 yrs) |
| c) to provide RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe with the relevant information on national-based activities annually, and as they occur, with the purpose of reviewing and evaluating its ongoing relevance | All RTF-WCR Members June 2019 |
Terms of Reference for:

The Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region

Purpose of the Regional Task Force

The Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region and El Salvador (hereafter RTF-WCR) should be considered as a supporting regional mechanism established within the framework of the UNEP’s Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP), in order to facilitate:

- Accession and implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention), adopted in 2004;
- Ensuring coherent compliance with and enforcement of the said BWM Convention and of its associated guidelines, recommendations and practices in the Wider Caribbean Region;
- Implementing the measures decided upon under the Regional Strategy to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in Ships’Ballast Water and Sediments (hereunder referred to as the Regional Strategy) and its Action Plan;
- Promoting legal, technical and scientific cooperation on subjects relating to Ballast Water and Sediments Control and Management;
- Exchanging of experiences and information on topics such as BWM measures implemented at the national level and their consequences and Invasive Alien Species (IAS) control, management and eradication; and
- Contributing to the work carried out at a global level in the field of ships’ballast water and invasive species.
- Supporting the activities of the National Task Forces in the region.

Mandate of the Regional Task Force in the context of implementing the Strategy and its related Action Plan:

In the context of implementing the Regional Strategy and its related Action Plan, the Task Force should oversee, coordinate, and facilitate the work on:

- regular revision and updating of the Strategy and Action Plan in accordance with the latest developments on ballast water control and management at the regional and global level;
- promotion of the revision/development of national legislations, regulations and procedures on ballast water control and management with the view to ensuring a harmonized approach consistent with the BWM Convention;
- provision of a mechanism for information exchange on invasive alien species in ballast water in the region as well as on technical control measures taken nationally, regionally and worldwide;
· development and delivery of a *training programme for personnel* involved in ships’ ballast water control and management activities;
· promotion of measures designed to enhance the **public awareness** of ships’ ballast water and invasive alien species issues;
· coordination of national and regional **surveys and monitoring activities** of invasive alien species;
· coordination of national and regional **risk assessment activities** including selection of the appropriate follow up measures and management responses;
· promotion of research and development in the field of ballast water treatment techniques and technological methods of controlling the transfer of invasive alien species;
· achieving regional agreements on harmonized **Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) systems** and providing guidance to countries for the adaptation and implementation of such systems at national level;
· identification of **adequate resources for implementing activities** under the Strategy and its Action Plan from relevant Regional Organizations, Countries in the Wider Caribbean Region, regional and international shipping and port industries, bilateral and multilateral donors and technical cooperation programmes
· create mechanisms for interaction with the private sector (shipping, ports), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders (e.g. public health)
· ensuring the **long-term sustainability and continuity of activities** from self-financing sources within the region.

**Establishment and functioning of the Regional Task Force:**

**Establishment of the Task Force:**

· The RTF-WCR was established as a Working Group;
· The RTF-WCR was set up by the National Focal Points of the GloBallast Partnership Project and, alternatively, designated representatives of a National Lead Agency identified by the Countries in 2008.

**Composition of the Task Force:**

· The Task Force now comprises representatives designated by countries of the WCR and El Salvador.
· The Task Force is also composed of and assisted by the relevant International and Regional Organizations, namely the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP CAR/RCU), the Central American Commission on Maritime Transport (COCATRAM), CMOU, Vina del Mar, CARICOM and the Ballast Water and Sediments Scientific Committee;
· Representatives of major stakeholders (e.g. other interested regional agreements, industries, scientific communities, academia, NGOs, etc.) will be invited to attend the RTF-WCR Meetings and might be integrated into the RTF-WCR as deemed appropriate by its Members.
Chair and Secretary of the Task Force:

- The Chairmanship of the RTF-WCR will rotate between the Countries member of the Task Force. The Chairmanship should change at the beginning of each RTF-WCR Meeting and be approved in plenary.
- RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe will serve as Secretary to the Task Force and to the Task Force Meetings.

Modus operandi:

- The Task Force carries out its work by correspondence and by organizing technical subject meetings in accordance with the Rules of Procedure;
- During the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan, the Task Force will meet three times
- In the longer term, general meetings to review and evaluate the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan should be organized at least once a year;
- The RTF-WCR should periodically examine and review the present Terms of Reference and make appropriate recommendations.

Reporting:

The RTF-WCR, through its Secretariat should report to relevant Meetings such as Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme. The report should take the form of a progress report, including appropriate recommendations and proposals on the implementation of Strategy and Action Plan.
RULES OF PROCEDURE
For meetings of the
Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the
Wider Caribbean Region and El Salvador

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CHAPTER I – PURPOSES

Introduction

Rule 1
These rules of procedure shall apply to any meeting of the Regional Task Force on Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region and El Salvador (hereinafter referred as "RTF-WCR") which has been created as a working group within the Regional Strategy to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments (SAP), under the framework of the United Nations Environmental Programme, by a decision of the meeting of the Fourteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Eleventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, held in Montego, Jamaica from 6-9 October 2010. Subsequently, the SAP was reviewed and amended at a two-day Second Regional Task Force Meeting on the Ratification and Implementation of the IMO Convention on Ballast Water Management (BWM) that was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 17-18 April 2012.

CHAPTER II – PLACE AND DATES OF MEETINGS

Place

Rule 2
Unless they decided otherwise, the RTF-WCR will meet at a location decided upon by the participants. Virtual meetings are also supported.

Dates

Rule 3
(a) The RTF-WCR shall hold ordinary meetings once every two years and extraordinary meetings on request jointly formulated by the Chair of the RTF-WCR and the Director of the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe.
(b) The Director of the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe shall convene any meetings of the RTF-WCR.
(c) Any ordinary meeting shall fix the opening date and the duration of the next ordinary meeting.

CHAPTER III – PARTICIPATION

Invitation

Rule 4
The Director of the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe shall invite the members of the RTF-WCR.

Composition of Delegations

Rule 5
The delegation of each member participating in the RTF-WCR Meeting shall consist of representatives and such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.
Alternates or advisers

Rule 6
An alternate representative or an adviser may act as a representative upon designation by the head of the delegation.

Nomination of Representatives

Rule 7
The nomination of representatives, alternate representatives and advisers shall be transmitted to the Secretariat before the meeting. The nomination for government representatives shall be issued by the senior official of the relevant ministry, or any other person authorized for that purpose. The nomination for representatives of specialized agencies of the United Nations or other intergovernmental organizations shall be issued by their respective authority. The nomination for industry representatives shall be issued by the person or authority authorized for that purpose from their respective companies, corporations or associations.

Examination of nomination

Rule 8
Nomination of representatives, alternates and advisors shall be examined by the director of RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe.

Provisional participation in the Meeting

Rule 9
Any representative to whose admission is in question shall be seated provisionally with the same rights as other representatives until the Chair has reported and the RTF-WCR has given its decision.

CHAPTER IV - OFFICERS

Election

Rule 10
At the end of each meeting, the RTF-WCR shall elect a new Chair and a First and Second Vice-Chair from its membership who shall hold office from the time of their election until the end of the next (ordinary) meeting. These officers may be re-elected but may sit no more than two consecutive terms.

Chair

Rule 11
(a) In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him/her elsewhere by these rules, the Chair shall preside at the plenary sessions of the Meeting, declare the opening and closing of each plenary session, direct the discussion at such sessions, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. The Chair shall rule on points of order and, subject to these rules of procedure, have complete control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order. The Chair may propose to the Meeting the limitation of time to be allowed to speakers, the limitation of the number of times each representative may speak on a question, the closure of the list of speakers, the adjournment or closure of the debate, and the suspension or adjournment of the Meeting.
(b) The Chair, in the exercise of the functions of Chair, remains under the authority of the RTF-WCR through established voting procedures.
(c) Election of Chair, First and Second Vice-Chair should reflect representation from different languages

**Acting Chair**

**Rule 12**

(a) If the Chair is absent from a session or part thereof, the First Vice-Chair or in his/her absence, the second Vice-Chair shall act as Chair.
(b) A Vice-Chair acting as Chair shall have the same powers and duties as Chair.
(c) First and Second Vice-Chair should be from different countries

**Replacement of the Chair**

**Rule 13**

If at any time the Chair is unable to perform the functions of Chair for the remaining period of the term the First Vice-Chair or in his/her absence, the second Vice-Chair shall serve as Chair.

**CHAPTER V - SECRETARIAT**

**Duties of the Secretariat**

**Rule 14**

(a) RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe shall act as the Secretariat for the RTF-WCR and all Meetings.
(b) The Secretariat shall receive, reproduce, issue and distribute the documents, reports and resolutions of the RTF-WCR; arrange for the publication, custody and preservation of the documents in accordance with the decisions of the Meeting; distribute documents of the Meeting to the participating Governments and organizations as appropriate and, generally, perform all other tasks which the RTF-WCR may require through the Chair.

**CHAPTER VI – AGENDA**

**Preparation and circulation of the Agenda**

**Rule 15**

(a) The Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, will draft a provisional agenda, containing inter alia, items within the mandate of the RTF-WCR, as well as other matters remitted from the previous meeting, any items requested by Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention, and any other new items. The provisional agenda will be circulated at least two months before the opening of the meeting to the RTF-WCR Members for comment, and a revised provisional agenda drawn up for approval by the meeting.
(b) Other proposals, including proposed amendments to the provisional agenda shall normally be introduced in writing and handed to the Secretariat at least one month before the opening of the meeting who shall circulate copies to the RTF-WCR Members.
Additional items

Rule 16
At the opening of the ordinary meeting, the RTF-WCR, when adopting the agenda for the meeting, may add, delete, defer or amend items. Only items which are considered by the RTF-WCR to be urgent and important may be added to the agenda.

Extraordinary Meeting Agenda

Rule 17
The provisional agenda for an extraordinary meeting, as provided in Rule 3, shall consist only of those items proposed for consideration in the request for the holding of the extraordinary meeting. It shall be transmitted to the RTF-WCR Members at the same time as the invitation to the extraordinary meeting.

CHAPTER VII - CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Quorum

Rule 18
A quorum of the RTF-WCR shall be constituted by no less than 7 members of the RTF-WCR Members participating in the Meeting.

Speeches

Rule 19
No person may address the Meeting without having previously obtained the permission of the Chair. Subject to rules 20, 24 and 26, the Chair shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The Chair may call a speaker to order if the remarks of such speaker are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

Points of Order

Rule 20
During the discussion of any matter a representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall immediately be decided by the Chair in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chair. The appeal shall immediately be put to the vote and the Chair's ruling shall stand unless overruled by the majority of the representatives present and voting. A representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Time-limit on speeches

Rule 21
The RTF-WCR may, on the proposal of the Chair, limit the time to be allowed to each speaker on any particular subject under discussion. When the debate is limited and a representative has spoken for the allotted time, the Chair shall call such representative to order without delay.
Closing of list of speakers

Rule 22
During the course of a debate, the Chair may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the RTF-WCR, declare the list closed. The Chair may, however, accord the right of reply to any representative if a speech delivered after the closure of the list makes this desirable.

Adjournment of debate

Rule 23
During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, no more than two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote. The Chair may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.

Closure of the debate

Rule 24
A representative may at any time move the closure of debate on the question under discussion, whether or not any other representative has signified his wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of the debate shall be accorded to not more than two speakers opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. If the RTF-WCR is in any favour of the closure, the Chair shall declare the closure of the debate. The Chair may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.

Suspension or adjournment of the meeting

Rule 25
During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the suspension or the adjournment of the Meeting. Such motions shall not be debated, but shall be immediately put to the vote. The Chair may limit the time to be allowed to the speaker moving the suspension or adjournment.

Order of procedural motions

Rule 26
Subject to Rule 20, the following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all the other proposals or motions before the Meeting:
(i) to suspend the Meeting;
(ii) to adjourn the Meeting;
(iii) to adjourn the debate on the question under consideration;
(iv) for the closure of the debate on the question under consideration.

Decisions on competence

Rule 27
Subject to Rule 20, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the RTF-WCR to discuss any matter or to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before the matter is discussed or a vote is taken on the proposal in question.
Withdrawal of motions

Rule 28
A motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting on it has commenced, provided that the motion has not been amended or that an amendment to it is not under discussion. A motion which has thus been withdrawn may be reintroduced by any representative.

Reconsideration of proposals

Rule 29
When a proposal has been adopted or rejected it may not be reconsidered unless the RTF-WCR, by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to the mover and one other supporter and to not more than two speakers opposing the motion, after which it shall be put immediately to the vote.

Invitation to experts

Rule 30
The RTF-WCR may invite or admit to one or more of its sessions any person whose expertise it may consider useful for its work. A person invited under this rule shall not have the right to vote.

CHAPTER VIII - VOTING

Voting rights

Rule 31
Each member of the RTF-WCR represented at the meeting in accordance with the terms of reference of the RTF-WCR shall have one vote.

Required majority

Rule 32
(a) Subject to paragraph (b) of this Rule, decisions on all matters of substance shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of representatives present and voting, and decisions on matters of procedure shall be taken by a simple majority of representatives present and voting.
(b) If the question arises whether a matter is one of procedure or substance, the Chair shall rule on the question. An appeal against this ruling shall immediately be put to the vote and the Chair's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting.

Meaning of the expression "Representatives present and voting"

Rule 33
For the purpose of these rules the phrase "representatives present and voting" means representatives casting an affirmative or negative vote. Representatives abstaining from voting or casting an invalid vote shall be considered as not voting.
Method of voting

Rule 34
The RTF-WCR shall normally vote by show of hands. However, any representative may request a roll-call vote which shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the RTF-WCR Members, beginning with the delegation whose name is drawn by lot by the Chair. The vote of each representative participating in any roll-call vote shall be inserted in the report of the session concerned.

Conduct during voting

Rule 35
After the Chair has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The Chair may permit representatives to explain their votes after the voting. The Chair may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations.

Voting on proposals

Rule 36
If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the RTF-WCR shall, unless it decides otherwise, vote on the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted.

Elections

Rule 37
Nomination for officer of the RTF-WCR meeting will be made to the Chair by the members. All elections shall be held by secret ballot unless the RTF-WCR decides otherwise.

Equally divided votes

Rule 38
If a vote is equally divided on matters other than elections, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

CHAPTER IX - LANGUAGES AND REPORTS

Working languages

Rule 39
The working language is English. Other working languages such as Spanish and French may be used as the resources allowed.

Reports of the meetings

Rule 40
The Secretariat shall prepare reports of the meetings.

Languages of documents

Rule 41
The working documents of the meeting shall be made available in English and Spanish.
CHAPTER X - OBSERVERS

Authorized Observers

Rule 42
(a) Governments of States which are not members of the RTF-WCR may participate in the Meetings as observers. Delegations of States participating as observers shall not have the right to vote.
(b) Observers of other intergovernmental organizations (U.N. or not), non-governmental bodies, and industry which are not members of the RTF-WCR invited to the Meeting may, upon the invitation of the Chair and/or the Director of the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, take part without vote in the deliberations of the Meeting, on questions within the scope of their activities.
(c) Written statements submitted by observers or experts may be distributed by the Secretariat to the Meeting.

CHAPTER XI - AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Amendments to the rule of procedure

Rule 43
These Rules of Procedure may be amended by a decision of the RTF-WCR taken by a majority of the representatives of the RTF-WCR Members present and voting.
Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange and Sediment Management in Wider Caribbean Region Areas

(To be submitted as a Circular to IMO MEPC 72, April 2018)

Introduction

These guidelines are being submitted under paragraph 3 of Article 13 of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (Ballast Water Management Convention) whereby:

In order to further the objectives of this Convention, Parties with common interests to protect the environment, human health, property and resources in a given geographical area, in particular, those Parties bordering enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, shall endeavour, taking into account characteristic regional features, to enhance regional co-operation, including through the conclusion of regional agreements consistent with this Convention. Parties shall seek to co-operate with the Parties to regional agreements to develop harmonized procedures.

The proposed arrangements take into account the Ballast Water Management Convention as well as other adopted regional policies on ship’s ballast water exchange and sediment management. In particular, Regulation B-4.1.2 of the Ballast Water Management Convention established that BWE should occur at least 50 nautical miles from the nearest land in waters of at least 200 meters depth. Additionally, there are currently three Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs), and over 300 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), designated in the Wider Caribbean, some of which are also listed under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) of the Cartagena Convention. These and all future PSSA and MPAs should also be excluded from BWE areas.9,10 Further, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has identified six (6) distinct bio-regions within the WCR that should also be considered when conducting BWE in order to prevent the movement of invasive species throughout the Region.11,12

These guidelines form part of a regional strategy on ship’s ballast water management and invasive species, developed within the Wider Caribbean Region Strategic Action Plan (SAP). The SAP covers the Wider Caribbean Region area, defined by the Cartagena Convention as the marine environment of the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea and the areas of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent thereto, south of 30 deg north latitude and within 200 nautical miles of the Atlantic coasts of the Territories and States pertaining to the following Countries: Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica,

9 Listing of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas designated by IMO can be found at: http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/PSSAs/Pages/Default.aspx
10 The locations of Areas listed under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) of the Cartagena Convention appear in Figure 2, and a full list of all current Caribbean Marine Protected Areas can be found at: http://campam.gcfi.org/CaribbeanMPA/CaribbeanMPA.php
11 The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN); https://www.iucn.org/about/Greater Caribbean IUCN Bioregions; http://caribbean-rris.biopama.org/
Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America and Venezuela. In addition, the SAP also covers El Salvador.

The application of these Guidelines should apply to those vessels covered by Article 3 of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments (the Ballast Water Management Convention), taking into account the exceptions in regulation A-3 of the Convention. These Guidelines do not replace the requirements of the Ballast Water Management Convention, but provide an interim Ballast Water Regional Management Plan for Wider Caribbean Region areas until all RTF-WCR member states have ratified, and all applicable ships implemented, the BWM Convention.

This regime will not apply to ships that meet the ballast water performance standard contained in regulation D-2 of the Convention, or for ships that have to apply the D-2 standard in accordance with the application dates set out in regulation B-3 of the Convention. Ships entering or operating in the Wider Caribbean Region area are encouraged to apply these guidelines.

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**Definitions**

*Convention* means the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments; and is hereunder referred to as the Ballast Water Management Convention.

*Wider Caribbean Region areas* means the marine environment of the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea and the areas of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent thereto, south of 30 degrees north latitude and within 200 nautical miles of the Atlantic coasts of the States referred to in article 25 of the Cartagena Convention.

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**Guidelines**

1. **BWM Upon entering WCR areas**: Ships not meeting the ballast water performance standard contained in regulation D-2 of the Convention, or that do not have to apply the D-2 standard in accordance with the application dates set out in Rule B-3 (as amended) in the Convention, when entering the waters of the *Wider Caribbean Region area*, from the Atlantic Ocean or from the Pacific Ocean through the Panama Canal, should:

   a. undertake ballast water exchange before entering the Wider Caribbean Region, and according to the standard set out in the D-1 Standard of the Ballast Water Management Convention, at least 200 nautical miles from the nearest land and in waters at least 200 meters in depth;\(^\text{13}\)

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\(^{13}\) These geographical parameters are those set by Regulation B-4.1.1 of the Ballast Water Management Convention.
b. in situations where this is not possible, either due to deviating the ship from its intended voyage or delaying the ship, or for safety reasons, such exchange should be undertaken before entering the Wider Caribbean Region area according to the standard set out in the D-1 Standard of the Ballast Water Management Convention, as far from the nearest land as possible, and in all cases in waters at least 50 nautical miles from the nearest land and in waters of at least 200 meters depth, unless other areas are designated by port States following an assessment in accordance with the Guidelines on Designation of Ballast Water Areas for Ballast Water Exchange, developed by the International Maritime Organization, and in consultation with adjacent States and all interested States as appropriate.

2. **BWM for ships operating within the WCR Areas:** Ships not meeting the ballast water performance standard contained in regulation D-2 of the Convention, or that do not have to apply the D-2 standard in accordance with the application dates set out in Rule B-3 (as amended) in the Convention, when engaged in traffic between ports located within the Wider Caribbean Region area;

   a. should undertake ballast water exchange, according to the standard set out in the D-1 Standard of the Ballast Water Management Convention, as far from the nearest land as possible, and in all cases in waters at least 50 nautical miles from the nearest land and in waters of at least 200 meters depth, taking into account any Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas or Marine Protected Areas designated in the region; or

   b. if a port State decides to designate ballast water exchange areas, undertake ballast water exchange in areas designated by the port State for that purpose.

   i. such areas shall be assessed in accordance with the Guidelines on Designation of Ballast Water Areas for Ballast Water Exchange developed by the International Maritime Organization, and in consultation with adjacent States, and all interested States.

   c. Ships moving between the IUCN Biographic Regions of the Wider Caribbean, that have taken on ballast water within the Wider Caribbean Region area, are encouraged to conduct BWE within the same IUCN Biographic Region where the ballast water was taken on, prior to entering and discharging ballast water in another biographic region.

3. **BWM outside the WCR areas:** If a vessel has taken on ballast water while in the **Wider Caribbean Region area** and is intending to discharge ballast water outside the Wider Caribbean Region area, that ballast water should be exchanged outside the Wider Caribbean Region area, and at least 200 nautical miles from the nearest land in water at least 200 meters deep. If this is not possible for operational reasons, then such exchange should be undertaken outside the Wider Caribbean Region area in waters at least 50 nautical miles from the nearest land, in waters of at least 200 meters depth.

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4. **Tanks to be exchanged:** While only those tanks that will be discharged in Wider Caribbean Region areas would need to undergo ballast water exchange following the procedure in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, ballast water exchange of all tanks is encouraged for all vessels that have the potential/capacity to load cargo in the Wider Caribbean Region, as changes in routes and planned activities may occur.

5. **Sediment Management:**
   
   a. Release of sediments during the cleaning of ballast tanks should be avoided in Wider Caribbean Region areas.
   
   b. Sediments collected during the cleaning or repairing operations of ballast tanks should be delivered in sediment reception facilities in ports and terminals, according to Article 5 of the Ballast Water Management Convention, or be discharged beyond 200 nautical miles from the nearest land of the coastline when the ship is sailing in the Wider Caribbean area.
   
   c. For vessels that have spent significant time outside the Wider Caribbean Region, ballast water sediment should preferably be discharged and tanks cleaned before entering Wider Caribbean Region areas.

6. **Exemptions:** Exemptions may be granted to a ship on a voyage between specified ports or locations within the Wider Caribbean Region area, or to a ship operating exclusively between specified ports or locations within the Wider Caribbean area. These exemptions are to be granted according to Regulation A-4 1 of the Ballast Water Management Convention, and based on the Guidelines for risk assessment under regulation A-4 of the BWM Convention developed by the International Maritime Organization.

6. **Safety and Stability:** If the safety of the ship is in any way jeopardized by a ballast exchange, it should not take place. Additionally, these guidelines do not apply to the uptake or discharge of ballast water and sediments for ensuring the safety of the ship in emergency situations or saving life in the Wider Caribbean Region areas. As per Regulation B-4 of the Ballast Water Management Convention, if the safety or stability of the ship is threatened by a ballast water exchange operation, this operation should not be undertaken. The reasons should be entered in the ballast water record book and a Report should be submitted to the maritime authorities of the Port of destination.

7. **BWM Plans:** Each vessel calling at a port within the Wider Caribbean Region area should have on board a Ballast Water Management Plan complying with Guidelines for Ballast Water Management and Development of Ballast Water Management Plans developed by the International Maritime Organization, and should keep a record of all ballast water operations carried out.

8. **BWM Reports:** Ships not meeting the ballast water performance standard contained in regulation D-2 of the Convention, or that do not have to apply the D-2 standard in accordance with the application dates set out in regulation B-3 of the Convention (as amended), and do not conduct ballast water exchange prior to entering the waters of the Wider Caribbean Region area from the Atlantic Ocean or via the Panama Canal from the Pacific Ocean, should enter the reasons in the ballast water record book and a Report should be submitted to the maritime authorities of the Port of destination.
9. Governments are encouraged to exchange information on invasive marine species or anything that will help change the perceived risk associated with ballast water and sediment.

Figures

Figure 1: Wider Caribbean Region Areas of the Cartagena Convention
Figure 2: Protected Areas listed under the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the WCR. A full list of all current Marine Protected Areas can be found at: http://campam.gcfi.org/CaribbeanMPA/CaribbeanMPA.php

Figure 3: IUCN Bioregions of the WCR. Ships moving between IUCN biographic regions are encouraged to conduct BWE prior to entering and discharging BW.
Figure 4: Areas in the WCR meeting the requirements set out in Regulation B-4.1.2 of the Ballast Water Management Convention (at least 50 nautical miles from the nearest land in waters of at least 200 meters depth).