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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION (of UNESCO)

**Eleventh Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Sub-
Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC-XI)**
Qingdao, China, 21-23 April 2017

Item **7.3** of the Provisional Agenda

STATEMENT OF UN ENVIRONMENT/NOWPAP ON THE COOPERATION WITH WESTPAC

*Submitted by Liu Ning, Programme Officer
Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) of UNEP*



**11th Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific
(WESTPAC-XI), Qingdao, China
21 -23 Apr 2017**

STATEMENT of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)

**Dr. LIU Ning
Programme Officer**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan, I wish to convey our sincere appreciation to the IOC-WESTPAC for inviting us to this important meeting.

Since its establishment more than 20 years ago, NOWPAP has been making progress in building trust and understanding among its members – P.R. China, Japan, Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation - in the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment. NOWPAP region remains one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Rapid economic growth, and the increasing food and energy demands are putting significant pressures on the region's natural resources. NOWPAP as well as IOC-WESTPAC remain one of the few regional mechanisms promoting cooperation on environmental and sustainable development issues. Addressing these problems makes an important contribution to assure regional security, quality of life of societies, and long-term sustainability within the region and beyond.

The activities of NOWPAP are mainly implemented by its four Regional Activity Centers. In the past two years and of relevance to this meeting, NOWPAP has been conducting the following activities, among them:

- Pilot assessment of the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity
- Application on a pilot basis of the NOWPAP common procedure for eutrophication assessment;
- Case studies of seagrass and seaweed mapping in selected sea areas using remote sensing;
- Development of the regional Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs), targets and indicators;
- Maintaining the databases on major environmental data, marine litter, coastal and marine protected areas.

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The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identified conservation and sustainable use of oceans as one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 14) and as part of holistic and integrated development agenda for the planet. The level of ambition expressed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets necessitates transformative action at multiple scales. Regional organizations play an essential role in supporting and facilitating actions by national governments for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems and biodiversity, supporting and assessing progress.

The NOWPAP member states are currently developing a new Medium-term Strategy for the period of 2018-2023 and the implementation plan to tackle multiple regional challenges and ways to revitalize and expand the NOWPAP partnership. The draft Strategy intends to align future NOWPAP activities with the delivery of SDGs. The proposed focus areas of the Strategy include: supporting integrated coastal and river basin planning and management, assessing status of the marine and coastal environment, preventing and reducing land- and sea-based pollution, and conserving marine and coastal biodiversity. The Strategy is expected to be adopted at the 22nd Intergovernmental Meeting in December 2017.

The increasing number of joint projects with other regional and global institutions is one of the important pre-requisites of the successful delivery of the NOWPAP programme of work. NOWPAP would very much welcome inputs from the members of the IOC-WESTPAC to the Strategy and your participation at the next Intergovernmental Meeting. NOWPAP is looking very much forward to discussing the opportunities for collaboration between our institutions at the 11th Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific. We wish to work closely with the IOC-WESTPAC member states to explore areas of common interest and synergy such as marine and coastal biodiversity, including harmful algal blooms and future study of microplastics, and the use of remote sensing methods.

NOWPAP will be communicating further with the IOC-WESTPAC in the coming months in line with the mentioned initiatives.

We are looking very much forward to a stronger and more active collaboration between our organizations.

Thank you and we wish the 11th Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific a success.