

International Action Plan for the Management of Sargassum Floods
- courtesy translation -

RECOGNIZING the major role played by the 2009–2010 North Atlantic Oscillation, which caused a current anomaly that carried sargassum out of the Sargasso Sea into tropical regions where the seaweed found exceptional conditions for proliferation;

CONCERNED by the massive landings and the growing volume of sargassum floating across the Atlantic since 2011;

ALARMED by the negative impacts of this phenomenon on coastal and marine biodiversity, particularly coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves, and beaches;

NOTING that, upon reaching the shoreline and decomposing, these algae release gases known for their neurotoxic and corrosive effects, with proven consequences for the health of affected populations;

FURTHER NOTING that, during their drift at sea, sargassum can accumulate other harmful substances such as heavy metals—most notably inorganic arsenic—which are then released along the coast, contaminating soil and water resources;

CONCERNED about the consequences for human health and the growing economic burden of this phenomenon, which undermines sustainable development efforts in countries and territories of the Greater Caribbean and West Africa by affecting key sectors such as tourism and fisheries;

AWARE that the drifting of sargassum is a multidimensional problem that must be addressed at different levels: while these algae play an ecological role in the open ocean, they can be harvested and repurposed when adrift, and once stranded, they cause severe degradation to coastal and marine ecosystems, whose resilience is weakened by the widespread and accelerating nature of this phenomenon;

RECOGNIZING that the issue of sargassum clearly and increasingly affects the populations of the Greater Caribbean and West Africa, but also represents a growing regional and international challenge requiring collective engagement to manage these invasive algae linked to global environmental shifts;

WELCOMING the initiatives already undertaken to address this phenomenon, in particular the international initiative announced at the 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) held in Dubai in December 2023; the European Union's "Global Gateway" initiative, which seeks to coordinate the diverse range of actors and stakeholders within a unified framework developed through the conferences held in Santo Domingo in 2023 and Grenada in 2024; the regional Sargassum project for the coordinated and integrated management of sargassum in the Caribbean islands, led by the French Development Agency (AFD); the cooperation initiative SARG'COOP and the research network SARG'NET, co-financed by the European Union's Interreg programme and spearheaded by the Guadeloupe Region;

LOOKING FORWARD to engaging in discussions aimed at the adoption of a resolution addressing the challenges posed by sargassum at the next United Nations Environmental Assembly;

UNDERLINING the essential role of regional organizations in promoting a common response, including the Cartagena Convention through its regional discussion forum and working group under the SPAW Protocol; the sargassum sub-commission within the Association of Caribbean States (ACS); initiatives at the United Nations led by CARICOM and CDEMA's early warning systems; and the work of the OECS Commission;

WELCOMING the adoption of the declaration entitled "Final Title of UNOC 3 Declaration" and expressing a strong willingness to contribute to its implementation;

WE, the representatives of Costa Rica, France, Mexico and the Dominican Republic, gathered in Nice for the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference, CALL upon all governments and stakeholders to strengthen international cooperation in response to the challenge of massive sargassum floods, through the following action plan:

1. We call upon the international community to collectively address the massive blooms and influx of sargassum in the Greater Caribbean region, as a crisis that threatens economic and social development, as well as biodiversity and marine resources.
2. We aim to establish a shared framework, including a biological and legal definition of sargassum floods, at the upcoming intergovernmental meeting under the Cartagena Convention for the protection of the marine environment in the Caribbean.
3. We will strengthen both fundamental and applied international research, building on current efforts.

We encourage academic communities, governments, and relevant regional organizations to join efforts in building a common understanding of the causes and consequences of this phenomenon, and to document best practices and sustainable alternatives for addressing sargassum floods on the coast.

We call for enhanced cooperation in applied research focused on the recovery of sargassum, and for improved knowledge-sharing among governments, researchers, the private sector, and civil society, notably through the public forum established under the Interreg SARG'COOP II project.

4. We will facilitate the exchange of experience concerning prevention systems (advanced satellite detection, improved ocean current modeling, air quality sensors), floating barriers and at-sea collection, management of strandings (removal and storage), and the monitoring of impacts on ecosystems, local communities, and environmental quality (sensors, public alert systems), using and developing standardized protocols and shared digital platforms such as the Sargassum Information Hub.
5. We call for stronger international engagement in conducting oceanographic campaigns to better understand the recurrence of sargassum blooms since 2011 and the environmental conditions driving their proliferation in the tropical North Atlantic.
6. We encourage collaboration among subnational and national governmental institutions and the private sector to raise awareness, deepen understanding of the sargassum challenge, and build the capacities needed to implement collective and sustainable management strategies for the benefit of local communities.
7. We will support initiatives for the economic and ecological recovery of sargassum by promoting a shared understanding of the required technical and environmental conditions, identifying priority value chains (e.g. biorefineries, anaerobic digestion, biostimulants, biomaterials), mobilizing appropriate financing tools, and minimizing the cost and footprint of storage sites.

Through this plan, we call for urgent collective action and support the development of an effective intergovernmental coordination framework and a structured network of regional organizations, States, local authorities, and stakeholders to manage and reduce sargassum floods across their health, scientific, economic, and political dimensions.