

Regional Seas Partnerships for Sustainable Development





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**Regional
Seas
Partnerships**

for Sustainable Development

Introduction	2
Common Elements	2
A New Era	2
A New Global Strategy	2
Priorities	4
Partnerships	7
Regional Seas and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)	12
REGIONAL SEAS PROGRAMMES	16
Black Sea	16
East Asian Seas	18
Eastern Africa	21
Mediterranean	23
North-East Pacific	26
North-West Pacific	28
Regional Seas map	30
Pacific	32
Red Sea & Gulf of Aden	34
ROPME Sea Area	36
South Asian Seas	38
South-East Pacific	41
West and Central Africa	43
Wider Caribbean	45
INDEPENDENT PARTNER PROGRAMMES	47
Antarctic	47
Arctic	48
Baltic Sea	50
Caspian Sea	52
North-East Atlantic	54
REGIONAL SEAS ACTION PLANS, CONVENTIONS AND PROTOCOLS	56
CONTACTS	58
Regional Seas	58
Partner Contacts	59

Introduction

The Regional Seas Programme (RSP) was launched in 1974 in the wake of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden.

The RSP aims to address the accelerating degradation of the world's oceans and coastal areas through the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environments, by engaging neighbouring countries in comprehensive and specific actions to protect their shared marine environment.

Today more than 140 countries participate in 13 regional programmes established under UNEP auspices: the Black Sea, Wider Caribbean, East Africa, East Asia, ROPME Sea Area, Mediterranean, North-East Pacific, North-West Pacific, Pacific, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, South Asia, South-East Pacific, and West and Central Africa. Five partner programmes for the Antarctic, Arctic, Baltic Sea, Caspian Sea and North-East Atlantic regions are members of the Regional Seas family. Thus the Regional Seas Programme covers in total 18 regions across the world, making it one of the most globally comprehensive initiatives for the protection of marine and coastal environments.

Common Elements

The Regional Seas programmes have several common elements. The process of establishing a regional programme usually begins with the development of an Action Plan outlining the strategy and substance of a regionally coordinated programme aimed at the protection of the common body of water. Each Action Plan is based on the region's particular environmental concerns and challenges as well as its socio-economic and political situation. The Plan may cover issues ranging from chemical wastes and coastal development to oil spill preparedness and response or the conservation of marine species and ecosystems.

In most regions the Action Plan is underpinned by a strong legal framework in the form of a regional Convention and associated Protocols on specific problems. The legally binding Convention expresses in clear terms the commitment and political will of governments to tackle their common environmental issues through jointly coordinated activities.

A New Era

At the request of its Governing Council, UNEP strengthened its commitment to the Regional Seas Programme in the mid-1990s. Although the political, environmental and socio-economic variation between the numerous Regional Seas programmes is significant, the creation of a forum for dialogue, for exchange of experience and information, and for adoption of joint global challenges is still required. To generate and sustain its momentum, UNEP began to convene regular Global Meetings of the secretariats of all the regional and partner programmes to discuss their common interests, set priorities, and establish strong links with one another, with global environmental Conventions and with international organizations. That close collaboration continues today, and the Global Meetings are characterized by their enthusiasm, determination and productivity.

A New Global Strategy

The strategic directions listed below aim at strengthening the Regional Seas Programme at the global level. They are intended to complement the implementation of the programmes of work of the individual Regional Seas, as well as the decisions of the governing bodies of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs). They provide an opportunity to improve efficiency, individually and collectively, in the regional programmes. They facilitate cooperation and the incorporation of new elements in future programmes of work.

The Regional Seas Programme is an alliance between the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. Since its inception 30 years ago, it has constituted a unique approach to the protection of the coastal and marine environment. The regional programmes of work are mandated by the Governing Bodies of the RSCAPs.

The Regional Seas have a long history of challenges, successes and lessons learnt, that can be beneficial in optimizing the potential and prospects of both individual RSCAPs and the global RSP.

Changes in the development agenda, the state of the coastal and marine environment, the international policy framework, scientific knowledge as well as socio-economic realities and trends, constitute challenges that the RSP must meet, but at the same time provide opportunities for strengthening the programme as a whole.



FISHING IN CHINA. UNEP/STILL PICTURES

Recognising this, the UNEP Governing Council requested (Decision 22/2 III A) the development and strengthening of RSCAPs in promoting the conservation and sustainable use of the marine and coastal environment. It requested UNEP to encourage and support RSCAPs to incorporate new strategic elements in their programmes of work, bringing those elements to the attention of their respective Member States through governing bodies and other relevant *fora*.

In order to effectively address evolving challenges and the priorities identified by the UNEP Governing Council, and to contribute to reaching the relevant targets of Agenda 21, the WSSD Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals, the RSP must be strategically adaptive and proactive.

The following global Strategic Directions were agreed by the representatives of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans Secretariats at their 5th Global Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya 26-28 November 2003. These were further endorsed by the chairpersons of the COPs and IGMs or their representatives at the 6th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas, hosted by the Permanent Secretariat to the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution in Istanbul, November, Turkey, 30 November-2 December 2004.

Strategic Directions for the Regional Seas Programme 2004-2007

1. Increase Regional Seas' contribution to Sustainable Development, through the enhancement of local, national, regional and global partnerships with relevant social, economic and environmental stakeholders, and through the strengthened implementation of the mandates of the

Regional Seas, as a major contribution to the implementation of the WSSD Plan of Implementation and the goals and targets associated with the Millennium Declaration.

2. Enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of Regional Seas programmes through increasing country ownership, incorporating Regional Seas conventions and protocols into national legislation, promoting compliance and enforcement mechanisms, involving civil society and the private sector, building capacities, ensuring viable national and international financial arrangements, as well as developing assessment/evaluation procedures where appropriate.
3. Enhance Regional Seas' visibility and political impact in global, regional and national policy setting, through strengthening the Regional Seas partnership, increasing political and public awareness on the economic, social, and environmental importance of coastal and marine resources, promoting concerted information and communication policies, and ensuring participation and promotion of the Regional Seas in relevant national, regional and global *fora*.
4. Support knowledge-based policy making, enhanced public participation, education, awareness, and improved reporting on the state of the coastal and marine environment, its resources, and possible threats to them, by contributing to appropriate national and regional monitoring and assessment activities, amongst others.
5. Increase the use of Regional Seas as a platform for developing common regional objectives, promoting synergies and coordinated regional implementation of relevant MEAs, global and regional initiatives, and responsibilities of United Nations Agencies and other international actors, as a contribution to the sustainable management of the coastal and marine environment.
6. Develop and promote a common vision and integrated management, based on ecosystem approaches, of priorities and concerns related to the coastal and marine environment and its resources in Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, introducing amongst others proactive, creative and innovative partnerships and networks and effective communication strategies.

Priorities

With nearly 30 years of experience, the Regional Seas Programme provides an operational platform on which to construct regional sustainable development, using the deliberations and results of WSSD as the blueprint. Practically, it provides regional platforms for both implementation of the principles of sustainable development and for regional implementation of programmes and activities related to global conventions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

At a meeting held during the WSSD preparatory phase, the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans identified their major concerns and priorities as:

- **Land-based sources of marine pollution**, with particular emphasis on responding to pollution resulting from municipal wastewater. Municipal, industrial and agricultural wastes and run-off account for as much as 80 percent of all marine pollution. Sewage and waste water, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals, oils, nutrients and sediments – whether brought by rivers or discharged directly into coastal waters – take a severe toll on human health and well-being as well as on coastal ecosystems;
- **Ship-generated marine pollution, oil spill preparedness and response, and the construction of port reception facilities for ships' wastes**. These concerns were reinforced by the major oil spills that occurred off the coasts of France, Spain and Pakistan within the last four years. Some 20 percent of sea pollution comes from the deliberate dumping of oil and other wastes from ships, from accidental spills and offshore oil drilling, and hydrocarbons from ship engines;



WARNING: CONTAMINATED BEACH. R.SMITH/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

- ▶ **Increased urbanization and coastal development.** Seacoasts are under increasing pressure, as more and more of the natural environment is being paved over or converted into ports, tourist beaches, and grounds for new communities. Almost 50 percent of the world's coasts are threatened by development-related activities. Coastal development often entails dredging up bottom sediments, reshaping the shoreline and the destruction of mangrove forests and other habitats;
- ▶ **Conservation and management of marine and coastal ecosystems.** The overarching goal of ecosystem management is to protect and restore the functioning of marine ecosystems to ensure the provision of ecosystem services. It is important both for fisheries management and for maintaining important habitats for endangered sea turtles and marine mammals such as seals, manatees and small whales.

Marine ecosystems around the globe are experiencing unprecedented change. Human activities, including aquaculture, coastal development, fisheries, invasive species, present a collective and cumulative threat to our oceans. Coral reefs are among the most productive and diverse of all natural ecosystems but recent decades have seen 10 percent of the world's reefs degraded beyond recovery, and another 30 percent are in decline. In addition, biologically rich coastal wetlands, including mangrove forests and salt marshes, are favourite sites for dredging and filling by industry, farmers and home builders. The provision of marine parks and sanctuary areas are obvious first steps in providing a measure of protection of coastal and marine ecosystems and therefore establishing and managing Marine Protected Areas is one of the focus areas of the Regional Seas Programme.

The new Regional Seas strategy continues this emphasis, calling for the development with 'relevant regional partners' of programmes for ecosystem-based management of living marine resources and large marine ecosystems.

Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) is an interdisciplinary activity where scientists, coastal managers and policy makers focus on how to manage the diverse problems of coastal areas in the long-term. The rapid exploitation and development of coastal areas along with increasing population growth and urbanization have led to environmental degradation of

Major international instruments related to the marine environment

1992: Governments at the Rio Summit signed the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Climate Change Convention; the Baltic countries adopted the Helsinki Convention; the Oslo and Paris Conventions combined to create the OSPAR Convention; Black Sea States adopted the Bucharest Convention; the Arctic Council for the Protection of the Marine Environment was established; and the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal entered into force.

1994: The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) entered into force; and the North-West Pacific Action Plan was adopted.

1995: The Washington Declaration established the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA); the South Asian Seas Action Plan was adopted, the Jakarta Mandate of the CBD was adopted; and the Mediterranean countries revised and adopted the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

1997: The Jakarta Mandate and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea began operations.

2001: The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants was signed.

2002: The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg adopted a Plan of Implementation which set specific targets for the protection and sustainable development of the marine and coastal environment, such as to establish representative networks of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by 2012 and to encourage the application of the Ecosystem-based Approach by 2010.

2002: The Convention for the North-East Pacific (Antigua Convention) was adopted.

2004: The IMO International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and sediments was signed; and the Seventh Meeting to the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 7) adopted a series of important resolutions related to the conservation of the biodiversity of marine and coastal ecosystems.

world-wide marine ecosystems. Consequently, ICAM has become an important concept for regional sustainable development. Further development towards a more integrated approach to management of ocean, coastal areas and associated river basins led to the formulation of the concept of Integrated Coastal Area and River Basin Management (ICARM), which also encompasses the watershed area. ICARM takes into account ecological, economic, social and cultural aspects of this area at various levels of governance;

Over-exploitation and depletion of living marine resources including fisheries has emerged as a priority concern. Living resources such as fish, molluscs, and crustaceans are major food sources for subsistence communities around the world. However, over-harvesting combined with pollution and other environmental stresses have caused fish stocks around the world to collapse. Some 70 percent of major fish stocks are estimated to be overexploited or in danger of being so; and

- **Monitoring, reporting and assessment of the marine environment.** Accurate scientific and technical information is required to identify problems and the best way to tackle them. Then, once appropriate actions have been put into place, monitoring programmes are essential to coordinate them and check their progress.

Most of these concerns are explicitly mentioned in the WSSD Plan of Implementation, and are nearly identical to the significant issues identified by the Commission on Sustainable Development. As such they will serve as a useful basis for cooperation between the various MEAs, including the major environmental conventions, and the various Regional Seas programmes.

Other areas of concern in the Regional Seas on which to base future collaboration with MEAs, international organizations and civil society, include ecosystem-based management of living marine resources such as fisheries; data and information management including the use of sustainable development indicators; dissemination of best practices; and a multi-sectoral approach to ICAM.

Regional Seas Partnerships

The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans aim to act as a platform for the regional implementation of MEAs and global programmes and initiatives. In addition, the individual Regional Seas programmes are increasing both regional and inter-regional collaboration by promoting horizontal ties among the Regional Seas programmes and partner programmes; strengthening their cooperation with international organizations, and forging new partnerships.

GPA

The Global Plan of Action (GPA) for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (LBA) was adopted in Washington DC in 1995 and is coordinated by UNEP with the GPA Coordination Office in The Hague, The Netherlands. This programme is a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach that reflects the desire of 108 Governments and the European Commission to strengthen the collaboration and coordination of all agencies with mandates relevant to the impact of LBA on the marine environment, through their participation in a global programme.

The GPA plays an active role within the Regional Seas programmes and a great deal of progress has been achieved by the regional programmes in addressing LBA. For a start, 11 regions have Regional Conventions; of these, five regions (the Black Sea, Mediterranean, ROPME Sea Area, the Wider Caribbean and the South-East Pacific) have adopted Protocols on LBA. The Mediterranean, ROPME Sea Area, Wider Caribbean, East Asian Seas, South-East Pacific, Eastern Africa, North-West Pacific, Arctic, Baltic and the North-East Atlantic regions have ongoing monitoring programmes for the collection of data on LBA and their impact on the coastal and marine environment; the Mediterranean, ROPME Sea Area, Wider Caribbean, East Asian Seas, South-East Pacific, Eastern Africa, Arctic, Baltic and the North-East Atlantic regions have prepared LBA assessments.

Nearly all of the regions have ongoing or have prepared regional programmes on LBA, of which five have been adopted in the Mediterranean, ROPME Sea Area, Arctic, Baltic and North-East Atlantic regions. Further to this, National Programmes on LBA are also active in some of the Regional Seas programmes.

ICRI

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) operates as a global umbrella for coral reefs. ICRI was launched at the United Nations Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Islands Developing States in Barbados in 1994. ICRI is a joint initiative of several countries in partnership with other coral reef nations around the world, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, multilateral development banks, and private sector businesses. UNEP has given high priority to the implementation of ICRI, supporting regional workshops for the Wider Caribbean, East Asia, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, South Asia, Pacific and Eastern African regions. These workshops developed regional policy frameworks and programmes of action for the protection and management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems such as seagrass beds and mangrove forests. There are now three operational units of ICRI: the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN); the Global Coral Reef Management Network (GCRMN) and the International Coral Reef Information Network (ICRIN).



DIVER ON A CORAL REEF IN THAILAND. D. FLEETHAM/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

ICRAN is an innovative and dynamic global programme that focuses on strengthening the capacity of communities to manage their tropical marine resources through monitoring, education and public awareness and its activities are coordinated through the Regional Seas Programme. ICRAN responds to global conservation needs by recognizing both traditional and scientific perspectives of coral reef dynamics and respective social dependency. It seeks to put financial mechanisms in place that support and sustain direct on-the-ground action throughout the world's coral reef regions.

ICRAN is currently being implemented in the East Africa, East Asia, Pacific and the Wider Caribbean regions. ICRAN has since expanded to South Asian Seas (SAS) region. The ICRAN expansion to the SAS region was announced at the WSSD in 2002 and was endorsed at the Special Session of the Governing Council of South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) in January 2003. Presently ICRAN and SACEP are jointly producing a status report on coral reef management in the region and a proposal for improved site-based coral reef management. ICRAN is also trying to expand in the ROPME Sea Area and the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region.

WWF

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is dedicated to protecting the world's wildlife by directing its conservation efforts toward protecting endangered spaces and addressing global threats. WWF continues to support and is actively involved within the Regional Seas programmes. For example, the WWF Arctic Programme. WWF-US cooperate with the Wider Caribbean region in the SPAW (Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife) Protocol implementation and the Species list. WWF has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UNEP through the Secretariat for the Nairobi Convention for the implementation of programmes in the marine and coastal areas of the Western Indian Ocean region.

IMO

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) encourages and facilitates the general adoption of the highest practicable standards in matters concerning maritime safety, efficiency of navigation, and prevention and control of marine pollution from ships. IMO continues to support and is actively involved within the Regional Seas programmes, for example the Helsinki Convention and Nairobi Convention. IMO has cooperated with UNEP in facilitating the application of the Nairobi Convention and its Emergency Protocol and has assisted Governments of the Eastern African region in the development of national contingency plans as well as in the training of personnel.

IMO is the Secretariat for the International Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation Convention (OPRC 90), and has assisted the NOWPAP Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MERRAC) and NOWPAP Member States in the development of a NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and an associated regional MoU as well as other activities which belong to the scope of MERRAC. In addition the GEF/UNDP/IMO Global Ballast Water Management Programme (GloBallast) is assisting developing countries to reduce the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens in ships' ballast water, implement the IMO ballast water Guidelines and prepare for the new IMO ballast water Convention.



SHIP BREAKING UP, PAKISTAN. F.ARDITO/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

GEF

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in 1991 by the World Bank with UNEP and UNDP to help developing countries fund projects and programmes that protect the global environment. GEF grants support projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants. GEF has played an integral role in funding many projects within the Regional Seas programmes. The Large Marine Ecosystems Projects is one of the focus areas on which the Regional Seas Programme is collaborating with GEF. The Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project, with the overall aim of the new, six-year (2000-2006) project is to improve ecosystem health of the Black Sea by reducing inputs of nutrients and hazardous substances from land-based activities; the Caspian Environment Programme; and the Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are just a small selection of GEF Regional Seas programmes expanding across the world.

Currently, within the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), both the SAP-MED (Strategic Action Programme to Address Pollution from Land-Based Activities in the Mediterranean Region) and the SAP-BIO (Strategic Action Programme for Biodiversity in the Mediterranean Region) are ready for implementation. In addition a three-year project addressing Land-based Activities in the Western Indian Ocean region (WIO-LAB), funded by the GEF and the Government of Norway, has been approved, and implementation will start this year.

From a global perspective 121 countries are participating in the planning and implementation of GEF-supported Large Marine Ecosystem assessment and management projects, supported with US\$ 650 million, in the Regional Seas in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

IOC of UNESCO

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO has been one of UNEP's key partners in global scientific programmes for the marine environment and in many of the Regional Seas programmes for the last 30 years. Within the UN system, IOC has sole responsibility for basic oceanographic research. The IOC focuses on four major themes:

- 1) to develop, promote and facilitate international oceanographic research programmes to improve understanding of critical global and regional ocean processes and their relationship to the sustainable development and stewardship of ocean resources;
- 2) to ensure effective planning, establishment and coordination of an operational global ocean observing system to provide the information needed for oceanic and atmospheric forecasting, for oceans and coastal zone management and for global environmental change research;
- 3) to provide international education, training and technical programmes; and
- 4) to ensure that the ocean data and information obtained are widely available.

The IOC is currently cooperating with MAP in monitoring eutrophication and the implementation in the Mediterranean of the Global Ocean Observing System (MedGOOS/MAMA project). The SAS region also participates in GOOS and is currently setting up the Indian Ocean Global Observation System (IO-GOOS). In addition the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) was established in 1989 as a successor organization to the Regional Committee, with its main task to develop and coordinate regional marine scientific research programmes and ocean observations based on priority interests of the NOWPAP Member States. The NEAR-GOOS pilot project was formulated in order to promote cooperation in ocean observations and data sharing among the NOWPAP region.



FISH FARM IN CHINA. UNEP/STILL PICTURES

FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is the lead United Nations agency for agriculture, forestry, fisheries and rural development. An intergovernmental organization, FAO has 183 member countries plus one member organization, the European Community. FAO plays an important role in the Regional Seas Programme. FAO is an observer in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, the Mediterranean (MAP) and the Antarctic region. The Commission on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) is one of the regional fisheries bodies that interacts with the FAO directly on issues such as IUU (illegal, unregulated and unreported) fishing and incident mortality of seabirds during longline fishing. FAO collaborates with the MAP in the framework of the SAP-BIO project on the interaction of fisheries and marine ecosystems. FAO also cooperates in the Mediterranean region on issues in relation to responsible fishing through the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); agricultural issues through the Blue Plan Regional Activity Centre; and soil erosion issues through the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre.

IAEA

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays an important role as an observer to a number of Regional Seas programmes. The Marine Environment Laboratory (IAEA/MEL) cooperates with MAP in assisting Member States to understand, monitor and protect the marine environment and coordinates technical aspects of international ocean protection, training and assistance programmes, as well as technical supervision of the National Monitoring Programmes' data-quality assurance of chemical analyses through inter-training, inter-calibration, scientific visits, and purchase of instruments and quality control.

IUCN

IUCN – The World Conservation Union has actively worked in many of the Regional Seas programmes, particularly the Wider Caribbean, ROPME Sea Area, Eastern Africa, South Asia, Pacific, and West and Central Africa. Their regional collaboration began in the MAP region, where IUCN helped to draft and implement the Protocol on Specially-Protected Areas (SPAs) and to set up the SPA Regional Activity Centre. IUCN is also cooperating with the MAP in the implementation of the SAP BIO Project (IUCN is a member of the SAP BIO Advisory Committee). IUCN has also worked to improve management effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in ICRAN Demonstration Sites in the Western Indian Ocean of East Africa by developing specific indicators and guidelines for MPA Managers to evaluate the effectiveness of their sites; designing pilot projects and field test the MPA management effectiveness indicators and guidelines; and increasing awareness and use of monitoring and evaluation in the management of MPAs. All these activities are covered under an MoU with the Eastern Africa region.

SIDS

The Small Islands Developing States' Programme of Action (SIDS/POA) explicitly identifies coastal and marine resources as an area requiring urgent action and asks for the establishment and/or strengthening of programmes within the framework of the GPA and the Regional Seas programmes, to assess the impact of planning and development on the coastal environment, including coastal communities, wetlands, coral reefs habitats and the areas under the national jurisdiction of SIDS, and to implement the POA. As a group, SIDS have special needs if they are to develop in a sustainable way. They share characteristics that make them economically, environmentally and socially vulnerable to shocks over which they exercise little or no control, placing them at a distinct disadvantage in comparison with larger countries. The marine and coastal environments of SIDS represent a vital resource for socio-economic development. Marine and coastal areas encompass diverse ecosystems and habitats which perform a number of functions and services. The Regional Seas Programme provides an important globally coordinated, region-wide mechanism to implement all relevant global environmental conventions and agreements. SIDS predominate in mainly two regions; the Wider Caribbean and the Pacific, but all SIDS are part of a Regional Seas programme.

Regional Seas and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

The new Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2004-2007 promotes the implementation of biodiversity-related conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Jakarta Mandate, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and the World Heritage Convention. In addition the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans collaborate with the Chemicals and Waste Management Conventions (Basel, PICs, POPs, BAT/BEP, etc.) and the relevant Atmosphere and Climate Change Conventions.

The Barcelona Convention and Cartagena Convention and its Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW), have signed MoUs with the CBD and the Ramsar Convention. In addition the Ramsar Convention has adopted additional joint programmes of work with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) together with the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB).

CBD

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is a comprehensive, binding agreement covering the use and conservation of biodiversity. Although the 1992 document contained no specific article on marine and coastal biodiversity, the Conference of the Parties (COP) dealt with these issues through the Jakarta Mandate on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity. The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans are considered to have a major role to play in the promotion of the Jakarta Mandate at the regional level.

The CBD already enjoys close cooperation with the Cartagena Convention in the Caribbean and the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) in the South-East Pacific, and is pursuing cooperation with several other Regional Seas programmes. The regional programmes also have much to contribute to the CBD work programme as it relates to guidelines on integrated marine and coastal area management, criteria for protected marine and coastal area establishment and management and guidelines for ecosystem evaluation, including indicators.

CMS

The collaboration between RSP and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) represents an important and active partnership. In 2004, the RSP and CMS developed a joint publication, *Review of Small Cetaceans: Distribution, Behaviour, Migration and Threats*, which summarizes the available knowledge on the distribution, behaviour and migration of toothed whales, as well as threats to which they are exposed.

Also in 2004, the RSP, CMS and the Government of Monaco discussed options for developing joint activities focusing on priority species/issues within the existing framework of the Regional Seas Programmes. Currently, they are formulating an agreement with the Convention for Cooperation in Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment (Abidjan Convention; 1984), for the development of a comprehensive strategy covering the current status, threats and conservation options for small cetaceans and the West African manatee, a species included in Appendix II of CMS. Within the framework of the Abidjan Convention for the West and Central African region, the RSP is working with CMS on other collaborative actions for the conservation and management of small cetaceans and sirenians of the region.

Under CMS, two regional agreements focus on the conservation of cetaceans within the Baltic, North-East Atlantic, Black Sea and Mediterranean regional programmes. The Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) entered into force in 1994 and the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), entered into force in 2001.



SPERM WHALE OFF EUROPE'S ATLANTIC COAST. DOUGLAS SEIFERT/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

CITES

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) recognized that international cooperation is essential for the protection of certain species of wild fauna and flora against over-exploitation through international trade and has established a strengthened relationship with the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) regarding the trade in toothfish.

In 1997, following the dramatic fall in catch levels in the Caspian Sea, CITES placed all species of sturgeon on Appendix II of the Convention. In 2001 UNEP convened an inter-agency meeting to assist the Caspian States to protect sturgeon resources and meet their obligations under CITES. This was followed by a high-level meeting later that year between UNEP, CITES, the Caspian Environment Programme (CEP), the European Union and the Caspian littoral States. The meeting agreed on a one-year action plan which included halting sturgeon fishing in the Caspian Sea for a limited period; called on CITES and Interpol to take specific measures to address the illegal trade in caviar; and asked the Caspian Sea States to agree on a joint management plan for sturgeon fishing.

Basel Convention

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal cooperates with MAP in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention Hazardous Wastes Protocol and assistance in the management of hazardous wastes in Mediterranean countries. The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and cooperates with MAP in the reduction and eventual elimination of POP releases.

UNCLOS

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) establishes national sovereignty over marine resources lying within coastal waters. The treaty was adopted in 1983, and entered into force in 1994. By establishing property rights that apply to the species and habitats found within coastal waters, the treaty provides countries with some incentive to better manage these resources and obligates Parties to protect and preserve the marine environment by cooperating regionally and globally, and to adopt laws and regulations to deal with land-based sources of marine pollution. It also provides a framework for establishing maritime zones, for regulating fishing and for marine scientific research. Nearly all participating states in Regional Seas programmes have claimed sovereignty over their marine resources.

MMAP

The Marine Mammal Action Plan (MMAP) is cross-cutting and relevant to several MEAs especially CITES, the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the CBD and the CMS. The central goal of the MMAP is to generate a consensus among governments on which to base their policies for marine mammal conservation under the auspices of UNEP. The MMAP has helped to enhance the technical and institutional capacities for the conservation and management of marine mammals in several Regional Seas programmes, particularly those of Latin America and the Caribbean, East Africa, West and Central Africa, the Black Sea and South-East Asia. As part of the implementation, certain Regional Seas Conventions have established regional Action Plans dealing specifically with marine mammals.

Marine Litter Initiative

The Marine Litter Initiative is a global venture to combat the growing problem of marine litter. Marine litter is found in all sea areas of the world – not only in densely populated regions but also in remote places far away from any obvious sources. Deficiencies in the implementation and enforcement of existing international, regional and national regulations and standards that could improve the



SEAL TANGLED IN DISCARDED FISHING NET. L.NAKASWA/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

situation – combined with a lack of awareness among the main stakeholders and the general public – are the major reasons that the marine litter problem not only remains but appears to be increasing worldwide. Marine litter comes from both sea-based sources and land-based sources, and measures to reduce or prevent marine litter in the marine and coastal environment have to be taken in a large number of places, within a large number of activities in a wide range of societal sectors. Marine litter is not only an environmental problem that can be solved solely by means of legislation, law enforcement and technical solutions. It is also a cultural problem and has to be addressed as such, namely by efforts to change attitudes, behaviours, management approaches, education and involvement of all sectors/interests, including that of the public at large.

The Regional Seas Programme and the GPA have been developing and implementing a number of activities on the management of marine litter in consultation and cooperation with UN Agencies, such as IMO, the IOC of UNESCO, the Secretariat of the Basel Convention and FAO. A “Feasibility Study on Sustainable Management of Marine Litter” has been published by UNEP/Regional Seas and the GPA in cooperation with partner agencies and organizations. The document deals with the problems, measures to prevent marine litter, analysis of the situation and proposals for action. A brochure, *Tightening the noose; the growing threat of marine litter*, was also published recently. The Regional Seas Coordinating Office is developing, together with the regions, a series of regional activities on marine litter in the Northwest Pacific (NOWPAP) region, the Mediterranean (MAP), the Black Sea and the Caribbean region, while HELCOM and OSPAR have expressed their interest in joining the development of the Marine Litter Initiative. A pilot project on marine litter management in Lebanon is being developed in the Mediterranean. The Regional Seas Programme and the GPA Office are considering developing a GEF proposal that could establish the necessary regional foundations and regional/national capacities to address the problem of management of marine litter.

Regional Seas programmes



THE BLACK SEA COAST. BLACK SEA COMMISSION

Black Sea

The Black Sea is slowly recovering from a deep environmental crisis it entered during the last few decades, when it has become one of the most environmentally degraded regional seas on our planet.

Having in mind that 87% of the sea water is naturally anoxic, the Black Sea is highly sensitive to anthropogenic impacts due to the huge catchment area and almost landlocked nature.

Every year, about 350 cubic kilometres of river water pours into the Black Sea. This water brings a variety of products originated from the activity of more than 170 million people, who live in some of the most populated areas of the 17 different countries along river banks.

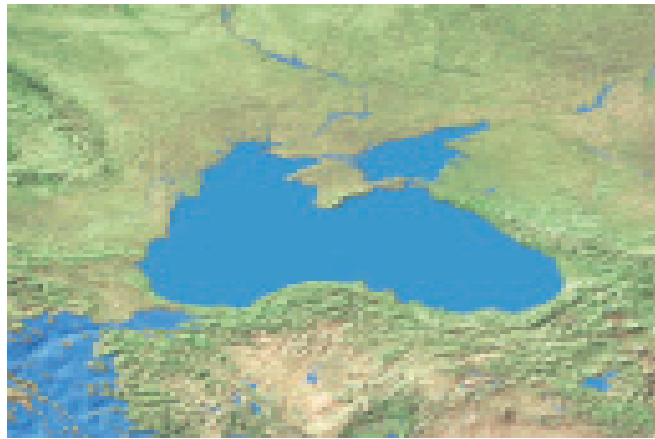
The sea continues to suffer from a long list of ailments: pollution by land-based sources, losses of biodiversity as a consequence of pollution and the destruction of habitats, overexploitation of marine living resources leading to a collapse of fisheries, etc., having a significant impact on the ecosystem health. In addition, there were and still are problems associated with coastal degradation, water-borne diseases, the introduction of opportunistic exotic species, and maritime pollution caused by the transportation of oil and other hazardous substances. All these pressures have led to an almost total breakdown of the sea's ecosystems and have hampered the social and economic development of the coastal countries.

The effort of the coastal states to safeguard the Sea is based on the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest Convention) and its three Protocols.

The document was signed in 1992 by the six coastal states. A Strategic Action Plan on the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea was adopted in 1996 – a comprehensive document

which set out the essential coordinated policies and measures for implementation of the Convention.

With the establishment of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (BSC) and its Permanent Secretariat – the first such international cooperation in the region – the efforts of the coastal states to rehabilitate the Black Sea were put on sound institutional and financially sustainable grounds. Funded by the gov-



ernments of the Contracting Parties to the Convention, the new organization is also attracting substantial technical and financial assistance from international donors. It is also bridging the gaps between the programmes and projects funded by the major donors.

The BSC cooperates with numerous organizations, which share the objectives of the Convention and/or conduct significant activities in the field of marine and coastal environment. At this stage, the consolidation of a region-wide investment strategy appears to be of basic importance. Coordinating

governmental efforts within the wider Black Sea basin with donors' activities will make it possible to reach an appropriate balance between national and regional priorities in the process of project selection, and in the sharing out of funds available internationally. The DABLAS Task Force provides the forum where, under the auspices of the EC, the Contracting Parties to the Conventions on the Protection of the Black Sea and the Danube River will work out and implement a joint investment strategy with multilateral and bilateral donors.

The first outcome of the process has been the establishment of a system of criteria and a database for the prioritization of proposals for investments in the wider Black Sea region. The first list of priority projects was approved by the Task Force in 2003.

The protection of biodiversity is a high priority. A new Protocol on the protection of biodiversity was signed at the Ministerial Meeting in Sofia, 2002, thus widening the scope of the Convention and transforming it into a contemporary instrument of international environmental protection.

History

The Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution was adopted in 1992 and entered into force 1994. Associated Protocols concern:

- Protection of the Black Sea Marine Environment Against Pollution from Land-based Sources, adopted 1992, entered into force 1994.
- Cooperation in combating pollution of the Black Sea Marine Environment by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Emergency Situations, adopted 1992, entered into force 1994.
- Protection of the Black Sea Marine Environment against Pollution by Dumping adopted in 1992, entered into force in 1994.
- Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation, signed in 2002, near ratification in 2005.

The Black Sea Environment Programme was adopted in 1993–1996.

The Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea was adopted in 1996 and amended in 2002.

The Black Sea Environmental Programme (BSEP) was the first UNDP/GEF project for technical assistance to the Black Sea coastal states. This intervention continues through the GEF/UNDP Strategic Partnership that includes major stakeholders in the process of rehabilitation of the Black Sea. Many other partner organizations and multilateral and bilateral donors have joined the effort to improve the sea's unique ecosystem.

The experience in contemporary environmental management gained by the BSC, including its cooperation with many other international conventions and agreements, showed that the region's capacity to tackle the problem has greatly increased.

In most of the Black Sea coastal states, new environmental legislation is directly translating the environmental directives of the European Union into national law, thus guaranteeing that the right direction will be chosen in the expected economic development of the region – one that saves resources and is environmentally friendly.

Today, the Black Sea coastal states have begun to play a proactive role in rehabilitation and protection of their ecosystem for present and future generations. Our major task now is to take this message to everyone.

Plamen Dzhadzhhev, Executive Director, Permanent Secretariat, Black Sea Commission

East Asian Seas

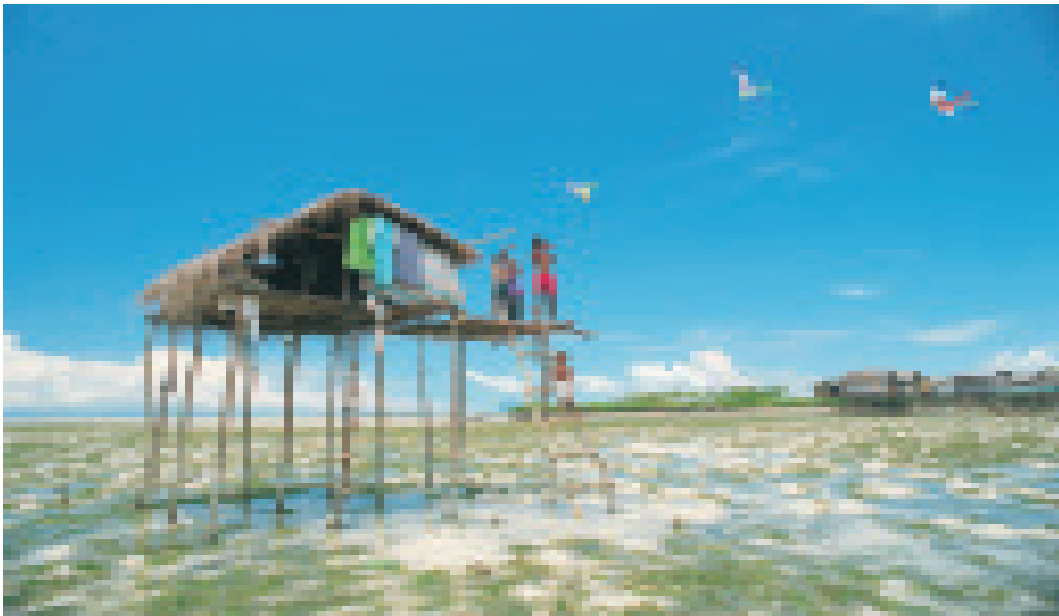
East Asia's astonishing variety of political, economic and social systems is matched by its environment: ship-crowded straits, island groups, wide gulfs, shallow estuaries and some of the most heavily populated countries in the world, where millions rely on fish for much of their protein. The threats to the region are just as varied, including erosion and siltation from land development, logging and mining, blast fishing in coral reefs, cutting and conversion of mangroves, overfishing, unimpeded coastal development and disposal of untreated wastes.

The Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the East Asian region, otherwise known as the East Asian Seas Action Plan, was approved in 1981, stimulated by concerns about the effects and sources of marine pollution. It was initially sub-regional, involving only five countries of ASEAN namely Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Australia, Cambodia, China, Republic of Korea and Vietnam joined in 1994, bringing together ten countries ready to face up to East Asia's marine environmental challenges. The Trust Fund was also established to support the implementation of the Action Plan.



Among the Regional Seas Programmes, East Asia has steered a unique course. There is no regional convention. Instead, the programme promotes compliance with existing environmental treaties and is based on member countries' goodwill.

The Action Plan is steered by its coordinating body, COBSEA. The East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit (EAS/RCU) in Bangkok serves as Secretariat, and is responsible for coordinating the activities of governments, non-governmental organizations, UN and donor agencies, and individuals in caring for the region's marine



STILT HOMES IN MALAYSIA. L.GEEN/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

environment. EAS/RCU works in close cooperation with the region's non-governmental and governmental organizations and existing regional programmes and projects to improve coordination and cooperation among parties working on the coastal and marine environment.

The Action Plan is steered by its coordinating body, COBSEA. The East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit (EAS/RCU) established in 1993 in Bangkok serves as Secretariat, and is responsible for coordinating the activities of governments, non-governmental organizations, UN and donor agencies, and individuals aimed at caring for the region's marine environment. The Action Plan encompasses an assessment of the effects of human activities on the marine environment, control of coastal pollution and waste management and protection of coastal habitats such as mangroves, seagrasses and coral reefs. An in-depth evaluation of the Action Plan was conducted in 1986 resulting in the formulation of a long-term strategy (1987-96) to guide future development of the Action Plan. The revised EAS Action Plan was adopted in 1994 together with the long-term strategy of COBSEA for the 1994-2009 period.

In 2000, COBSEA endorsed the UNEP/GEF Project "Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand" and adopted the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA/LBA) project and the revised Long-Term Plan as contained in the document "Vision and Plan – A Systematic Approach". Seven areas of focus were identified:

- Develop and maintain a regional database (later changed to a regional metadata base).
- Promote, improve, network and maintain marine protected areas in the region.
- Implement activities to restore marine habitats.
- Assist with State of Environment reporting for agencies preparing such reports and marine and coastal assessment.
- Implement activities to reduce land-based sources of pollution.
- Encourage monitoring and environmental assessment including mapping in the region.
- Encourage and implement projects to build capacity in the member countries to counter environmental degradation and to educate all members of the community in caring for the marine resources of the region.



FISHING NEXT TO AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, THAILAND. D.JUNTAWANSUP/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

The 2002 ICRAN workshop was the first opportunity for the eight demonstration and target site managers to meet and discuss management issues. These included management plans (successful and non-successful), existing legislation, monitoring for better management, identifying needs to increase public awareness, and improved management at each site. The workshop proceedings included a series of reports from demonstration sites identifying good management practices for Marine Protected Areas, Community Based Management, and tourism and identifying areas for improving management in target sites.

After more than 20 years of successful operations and interventions in the Seas of East Asia, plans currently under deliberation include moving beyond COBSEA's traditional focus on coastal/marine environmental issues towards broader regional marine policy coordination. It would include measures to strengthen national capacities to better manage regional marine programs, to enhance post-project sustainability, and to assist governments to maximize opportunities inherent in the strategic marine-related policy issues that face governments in the region today. An expansion of membership to also include Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste would ensure that all countries bordering the Seas of East Asia would be represented at COBSEA. Two regional workshops were held in Bangkok during May 2005 to discuss and further advance these ideas.

After the tsunami

The December 2004 tsunami came as a great shock to the environment of our region, in addition to its toll in human lives and livelihoods. Many corals were affected, particularly in the intertidal zone, and rubbish from run off continues to damage them in spite of the best efforts of clean-up teams.

The enormous rebuilding effort now under way offers an opportunity to plan the placement of roads, walls, resorts, hotels, houses and aquaculture installations more wisely. The replanting of mangroves is essential: coastal mangrove forests proved their worth by protecting thousands of people from the tsunami. Fishing fleets, instead of being rebuilt to former unsustainable levels, can be regulated and restricted to save the region's endangered fish stocks.

The urgent need for an early warning system and improved disaster management to reduce the loss of human lives and property is now clear. But just as important to the long-term future of the region's coastal communities is the rehabilitation of their damaged marine ecosystems.

Srisuda Jarayabhand, Coordinator, East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit (EAS/RCU)

Eastern Africa

The eastern African region, also referred to as the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), has some of the world's most valuable coastal and marine ecosystems. The region's mangrove forests, seagrass beds, seashores, lagoons and coral reefs provide essential habitats for a rich biodiversity of species. It is conservatively estimated that the region supports more than 11,000 species of plants and animals, 15 percent of which are found nowhere else on Earth. More than 20 percent of the world's tropical inshore fish species are found exclusively in the region, as are nesting sites for 70 percent of the world's marine turtles. The livelihood and recreation needs of 30 million people depend on these resources.

However, a variety of human activities including unplanned urbanization, discharge of untreated municipal waste water and industrial effluent, destructive fishing practices, overexploitation of resources, physical alteration and habitat destruction, are rapidly degrading the marine and coastal environment of the WIO region. These problems are attributed in part to low economic growth rates, poverty, rapid population growth and poor resource management.

The Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention) and its two Protocols were signed in 1985 and have been in force since 30 May 1996. South Africa, which was not a signatory in 1985, acceded to the Nairobi Convention and associated Protocols on 16 May 2003. Thus the Nairobi Convention has now achieved 100 percent ratification, a rare achievement for a regional/international convention! The Nairobi Convention covers five mainland states (Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa) and five island states (Seychelles, Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Réunion [France]).

The Convention offers a legal framework and coordinates the efforts of the countries of the region to plan and develop programmes that strengthen their capacity to protect, manage and develop their coastal and marine environment sustainably. It also provides a forum for inter-governmental discussions that lead to better understanding of regional environmental problems and the strategies needed to address them; develops and implements regional programmes and projects that address critical national and trans-boundary issues; and promotes the sharing of information and experiences among countries in the WIO region and with the rest of the world.

The Nairobi Convention is a partnership Convention. It recognizes that success in the protection, management and development of the coastal and marine environment of the WIO region will depend on effective partnerships built on strategic linkages between governments, NGOs and the private sector. Since 2001 the Convention has constructed partnerships with the



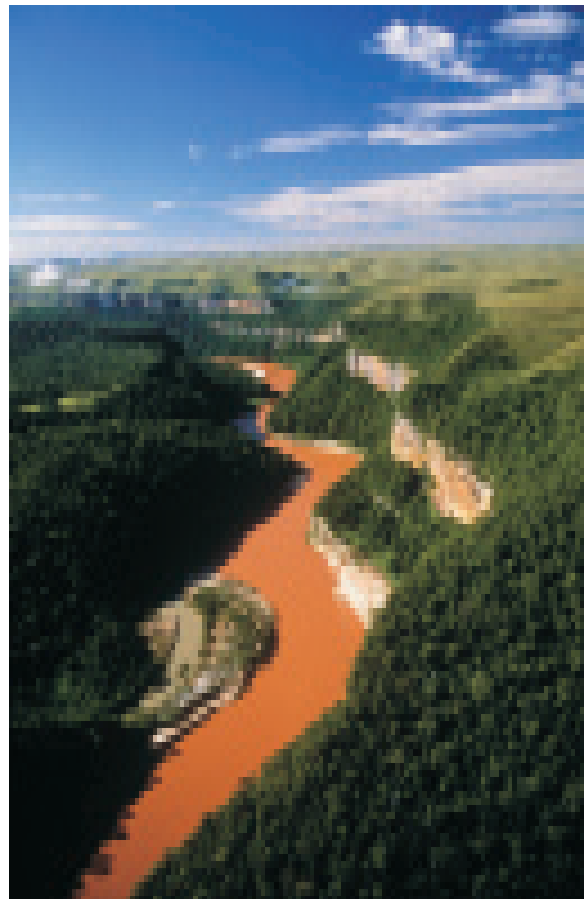


ARTISANAL FISHING ON THE EAST AFRICAN COAST. UNEP

governments of the region through the respective focal points and national taskforces, and with other relevant stakeholders such as research and academic organizations, NGOs and the private sector.

In recognition of the limitations that exist in expertise and resources in the WIO Eastern African Region, the Nairobi Convention has partnered with the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission, HELCOM), and signed a Memoranda of Understanding with regional and global NGOs such as WWF, IUCN and Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), among others. Through these partnerships and linkages, the Nairobi Convention has harnessed a broad-based support, which is critical for the successful implementation of its work programme.

The Nairobi Convention provides a coordinating framework through which contracting parties implement activities that make a difference at the grassroots level. In the fourth meeting of the Conference of Parties held in July 2004 in Madagascar, the Contracting Parties



MADAGASCAR: ERODED SOIL WASHES TO THE SEA. BRY-UNEP/STILL PICTURES

discussed a four-year programme of work that is a significant milestone for the Nairobi Convention. For the first time in the history of the Convention, the Conference of Parties approved a fully funded programme which includes a US\$ 11 million project to address land-based activities in the WIO region through demonstration projects in each of the participating countries. The project will complement other ongoing projects, which include capacity-building and provision of Geographic Information System equipment to and the publication of country *Atlases of the Coastal and Marine Environment* and development of a regional database.

The tsunami event of 26 December 2004 further reinforced the need for maps based on GIS/Remote sensing satellite images, in particular to be used for coastal planning and an even more urgent need for capacity building in environmental rapid assessment of the impacts of natural disasters to guide national response, planning and implementation.

Mr Rolph Payet, Interm Coordinator-Nairobi convention and Mr Dixon Waruinge, Programme Officer, Regional Seas, Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions, UNEP

HISTORY

The Eastern African Action Plan adopted in 1982, entered into force in 1996.

The Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region adopted in 1985, entered into force in 1996. Associated protocols are:

- ▶ Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wild Fauna and Flora in the Eastern African Region, adopted in 1985, entered into force in 1996.
- ▶ Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Marine Pollution in Cases of Emergency in the Eastern African Region, adopted in 1985, entered into force in 1996.

Mediterranean

Over the years, going back to Phoenician times, the people of the Mediterranean have managed to overcome various threats to their survival from major conflicts in the region. A new threat is now endangering their well-being and those of future generations, primarily from activities that are causing pollution to the marine environment, the source of life for both human beings and a large variety of marine living resources in the region. Compounding this danger is the fact that apart from the flow of surface water through the Strait of Gibraltar and the Dardanelles, precipitation and river run-off, the Mediterranean is an almost enclosed sea taking over a century to be fully renewed.

Conscious of the importance of safeguarding the Mediterranean Sea from pollution, the Mediterranean riparian states, together with the European Community agreed in 1975 to draw up a Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) to address this challenge. This led to the adoption a year later of the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution (Barcelona Convention). This was the first Regional Seas agreement reached under the auspices of UNEP.

The implementation of the various programmes under the MAP was entrusted to the Secretariat of the Convention, which has been operating since 1982 in Athens, Greece, under a host country agreement.

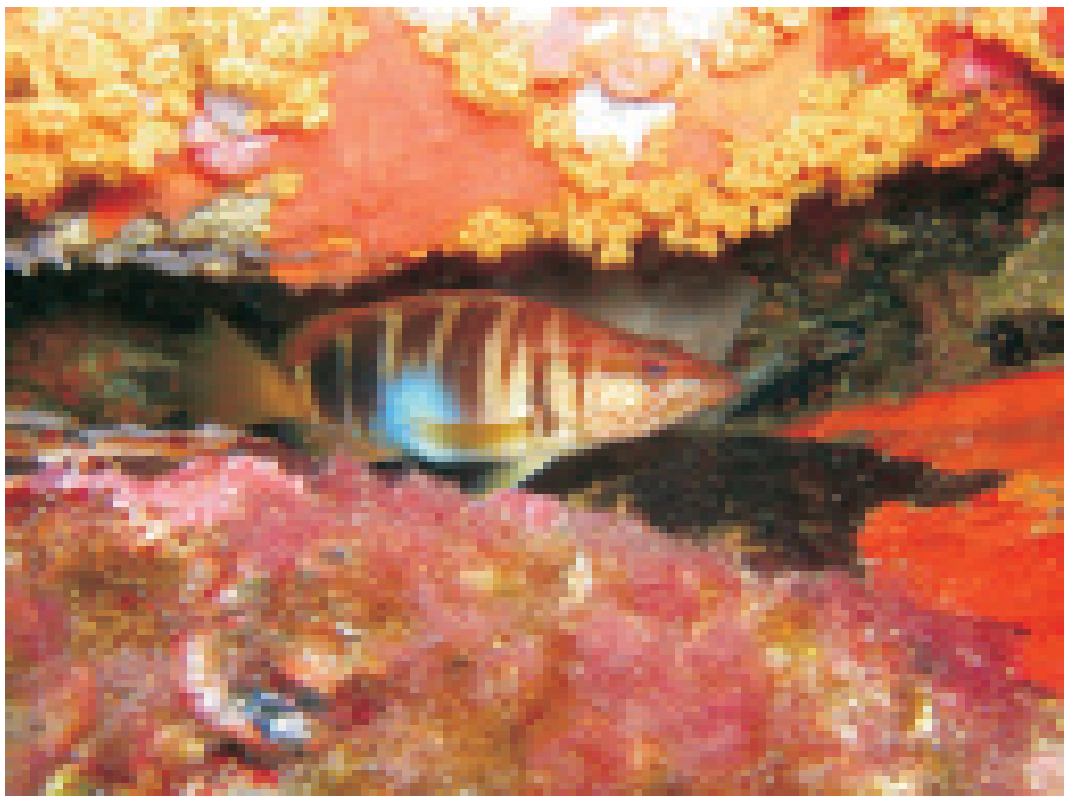
Following the Barcelona Convention, the Contracting Parties adopted further landmark Protocols addressing the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea from maritime activities, land-based sources, offshore activities, transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, and the protection of specially protected areas and biological diversity. Recent positive developments in this regard include the entry into force of both the amended Barcelona Convention and Prevention and Emergency Protocol, as well as the preparation of a Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development and of a protocol



on integrated coastal areas management. To help address these challenges six Regional Activity Centres located in Croatia, Tunisia, France, Spain, Malta and Italy have been established.

The year 2005 marks the 30th Anniversary of MAP. Important developments which have taken place include the amendments to the Action Plan and the Convention to give concrete meaning to the concept of sustainable development and the setting up of the Mediterranean Commission in 1996 as an advisory body for the development of a sustainable strategy for the region.

A major achievement of MAP in recent years has been the formulation of a Strategic Action Programme to address Pollution from Land-based Activities (SAP), a pollution reduction programme that will gradually bring about the elimination of pollution released from land-based sources into the sea by



GROUPER *SERRANUS SCRIBA* IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA. ADAM PHAROAH

the year 2025. Adopted in 1997, SAP represents the regional adaptation of the principles and aims of the Global Programme of Action to address pollution from land-based activities. With the assistance of the GEF, National Action Plans (NAPs) have been prepared intended to assist countries to take concrete actions at national levels. Another GEF-assisted programme, the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity (SAP BIO) was adopted in 2003 to foster the process of safeguarding Mediterranean Biodiversity.

Although these achievements have been significant, much still remains to be done. At the next biennial meeting of the Contracting Parties, a Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development is expected to be adopted. The Contracting Parties will also examine the external evaluation of MAP

HISTORY

The Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution (Barcelona Convention), was adopted in 1976 and entered into force in 1978. It was amended by the Contracting Parties in 1995 and recorded as the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean. It entered into force on 9 July 2004. Six Protocols complete, together with the Convention, the so-called Barcelona System. These are:

- ▶ The Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft, adopted on 16 February 1976, entered into force 1978, amended on 10 June 1995 and recorded as Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea (amendments not yet in force).
- ▶ The Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, adopted on 25 January 2002, entered into force on 17 March 2004, replacing the Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, in force since 1976.
- ▶ The Protocol on Land-Based Sources, adopted on 17 May 1980, entered into force on 17 June 1983 and amended on 7 March 1996 and recorded as the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (amendments not yet in force).
- ▶ The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, adopted on 10 June 1995, entered into force on 12 December 1999 replacing the Protocol concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas which was in force since 1986.
- ▶ The Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil, adopted on 14 October 1994 (not yet in force).
- ▶ The Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, adopted on 1 October 1996 (not yet in force).

A Strategic Action Programme to address Pollution from Land-based Activities was adopted in 1997.

A Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity was adopted in 2003.

and the re-defining of its mandate to address future challenges in a sustainable way. Further to this, the Contracting Parties will discuss the adoption of a new strategy regarding Coastal Zone Management, decide on a strategy to implement the new Prevention and Emergency Protocol, launch a new GEF project, and implement the NAPs to address land-based pollution. This is a tall order. However, on the basis of past experiences and counting on the full political support of the Contracting Parties, the implementation of these tasks stands a very good chance of success.

In the same way that the peoples of the region have managed to overcome other dangers in the past, so they will win the challenges of the future.

Mr Paul Mifsud, Coordinator, Mediterranean Action Plan

North-East Pacific

The Central American coastline of the North-East Pacific hosts a variety of tropical and subtropical habitats including mangrove swamps, productive fishing grounds, and species-rich forests that extend to the water's edge. Millions of people depend on these ecosystems and their resources for food, construction materials and income from tourism-related industries. In some places using the resources of those ecosystems constitutes the only economic activity.

Over 70% of the population of Central America live on this drier Pacific side, and so it is here where the environmental pressures are the greatest. Forest clearance, over-exploitation of resources, expanding maritime trade, rapid development, poverty, the high risk of impacts from natural events, limited capacity to counteract those effects, serious environmental vulnerability and political conflict are rampant. The result has been widespread loss of plant and animal species, degraded and eroded soils, destruction of biodiversity-rich mangrove areas and pollution of both coastal and inland waters.



ECOTOURISTS AND GREY WHALE OFF THE COAST OF MEXICO. D.FLEETHAM/UNEP/STILL PICTURES



Pollution from the land is made potentially even more damaging in the region because of the numerous sheltered bays and gulfs where the natural dispersal of oil and toxic chemicals such as agrochemicals is limited. The region is also an important shipping route for vessels sailing from Panama to Alaska, and much of the oil transported from Alaska to the east coast of America transits the Panama Canal or the Laguna de Chiriqui oil pipeline.

Moreover, the region still has a troubled legacy to overcome. In the 1980s, Central America was gripped by a profound political and economic crisis marked by an accumulated 18.3% decline in per capita gross domestic product. The end of the Cold War something over a decade ago may have ended the major conflicts afflicting the region, but its legacy of poverty endures.

These many problems present a formidable challenge which the countries of the region are determined to meet. In February 2002, history was made with the signature in La Antigua Guatemala City, Guatemala, of the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the North-East Pacific (The Antigua Convention).

The governments also approved an Action Plan detailing how the countries concerned will improve the environment of the North-East Pacific for the benefit of people and wildlife. Key parts of the Plan will include an assessment and crackdown on the high levels of sewage and other pollutants being discharged from cities into the Pacific Ocean, compromising the health of bathing waters and risking outbreaks of water-borne diseases such as cholera. Other priority issues include physical alteration and destruction of coastal ecosystems and habitats, overexploitation of fishery resources, Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) including related river basins, and the effects of eutrophication. Yet another priority will be to assess the risks from oil pollution and evaluate the availability of clean-up equipment and personnel to deal with them.

One of the main components of the Action Plan is the reinforcement and invigoration of the national capacities of the participant governments, through appropriate levels of training and teaching in the techniques and methodologies to evaluate, monitor and control the causes of the deterioration of the coastal and maritime ecosystems of the region, together with the examination and development of a pertinent regulatory scheme.

The Action Plan's Secretariat COCATRAM (Central American Commission for Marine Transport) will seek financial support for its implementation and explore ways to work with their neighbour, the Caribbean Action Plan, which shares many members.

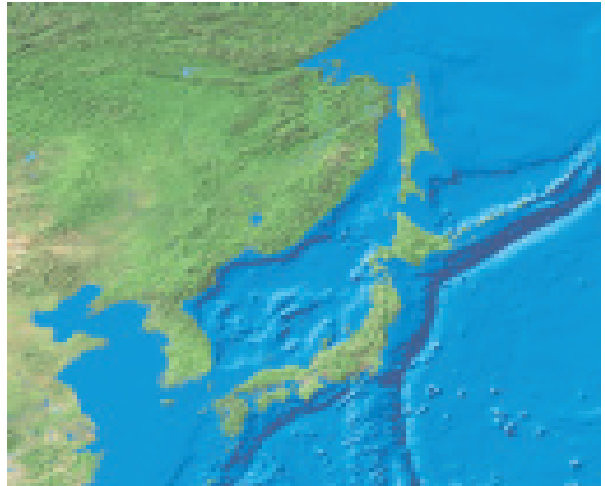
This new Convention and Action Plan mark an important step towards improving the health of the North-East Pacific environment and the lives of its people. It should also further heal the wounds of a troubled and insecure time.

As in other Regional Seas, the protection and sustainable management of the environment is proving an effective instrument for peace and cooperation.

Mr Juan Manelia, Northeast Pacific Programme, Central American Commission for Maritime Transport (COCATRAM)

North-West Pacific

The North-West Pacific Region is vast and features a large variety of marine and coastal ecosystems, from cold and deep water ecosystems in the north, to seagrass beds and coral reefs in the south. The region comprises semi-enclosed marginal seas situated in both the sub-polar and temperate zones. It has spectacular marine life, a commercially important fishing and mariculture grounds and rich offshore mineral resources such as oil. However, some parts are among the most highly



JAPANESE CHILDREN AT PLAY. UNEP/TOSHIKI YOSHIDA

populated areas of the world, resulting in enormous pressures and demands on the environment. Its people are particularly dependant on the sea for their food and livelihoods. Yet their health and the health of their environment are under growing threat, mainly from land-based activities and other sources of pollution.

Coastal development, industry, transport, oil production and activities such as land reclamation and intensive mariculture take an ever-greater toll on coastal ecosystems. Chemical and industrial wastes, untreated municipal sewage, agricultural pesticides and nutrients in run-off cause widespread damage and stimulate eutrophication and harmful algal blooms. Added to these are oil pollution from wastewaters and accidental spills, atmospheric pollution and marine and coastal litter.

The countries of the region realized that by joining forces they could strike a wise balance between the provision for human needs, use of resources, and economic development on one hand, and the protection of the environment on the other. In 1991 a regional meeting of experts and national representatives from the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation was held in Vladivostok, in order to develop the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP). The meeting agreed on a work plan and timetable towards the preparation of the regional Action Plan that would lead to the establishment of a Regional Seas programme in the region.

During the 1st Intergovernmental Meeting in 1994, the four countries adopted the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific and established the NOWPAP Trust Fund.

HISTORY

NOWPAP is operating under the provisions of the "Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region" adopted by NOWPAP Member Countries at the First Intergovernmental Meeting. The Action Plan and three supporting Resolutions including five priority projects were adopted in 1994 at the First Intergovernmental Meeting held in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

NOWPAP member countries (People's Republic of China, Japan, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation) agreed to establish four Regional Activity Centres (RACs) in 1999. The Centres became operational in 2000-2002.

In 2000, NOWPAP member countries agreed in principle to establish a co-hosted NOWPAP Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) in Toyama, Japan, and Busan, Korea.

The NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan was adopted in 2003.

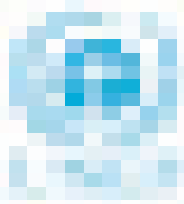
In November 2004, two offices of the co-hosted NOWPAP RCU in Toyama and Busan were inaugurated.

Nine Intergovernmental Meetings were held between September 1994 and November 2004.

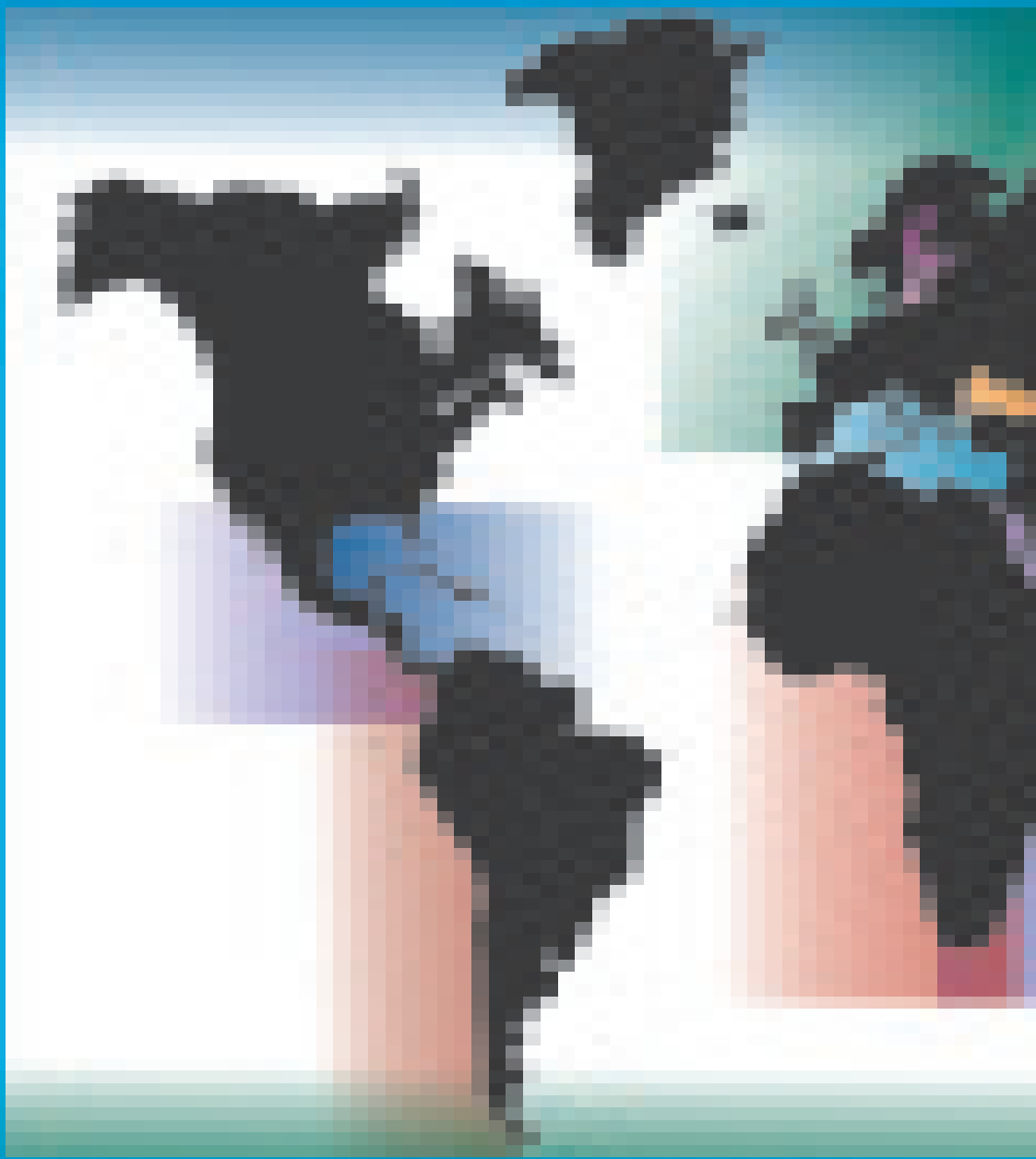
From 1994 to 2004, UNEP Regional Seas Coordinating Office acted as Interim Secretariat for NOWPAP.

In January of 2005 the co-hosted Regional Coordinating Unit in Toyama and Busan started operations.

The "Memorandum of Understanding on Regional Cooperation regarding Preparedness and Response to Oil Spills in the Marine Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region" was signed in 2004/2005.



Regional Science Center



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Q&A



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The Action Plan focuses on the wise use, development and management of the coastal and marine environment in order to achieve the greatest long-term benefit for the human populations of the region while protecting human health and ecological integrity for future generations. The plan incorporates several priority projects to be implemented through a network of Regional Activity Centres (RACs). Currently, four RACs are in operation: The Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment RAC (CEARAC) in Toyama, Japan; the Data and Information Network RAC (DINRAC) in Beijing, China; the Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response RAC (MERRAC) in Daejeon, Republic of Korea; and the Pollution Monitoring RAC (POMRAC) in Vladivostok, Russian Federation. These centres are responsible for carrying out their activities at the regional level and serve all members of NOWPAP.

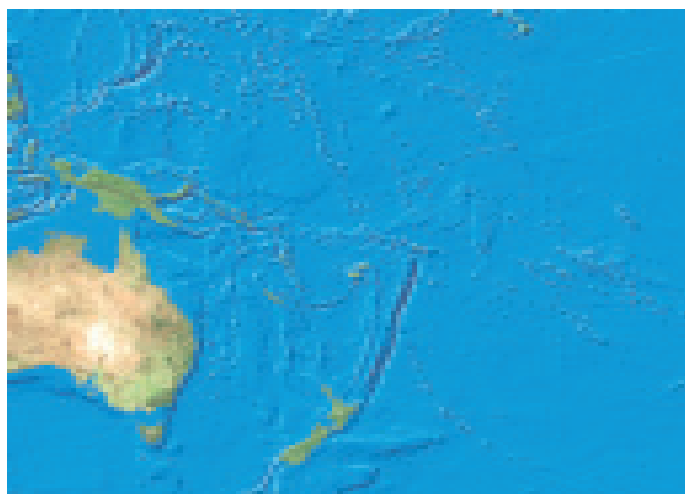
NOWPAP's Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU), which is administered by UNEP, was inaugurated in November 2004 and is co-hosted by Japan (in Toyama) and the Republic of Korea (in Busan) and serves as nerve centres and command posts for the Action Plan's activities. NOWPAP is a young programme, with challenging goals for the coming years: to develop regional monitoring and assessment activities, to develop public outreach and environmental education, to implement and further develop a Regional Contingency Plan for Oil Spills, and to prepare a regional Strategic Action Plan to Abate Pollution from Land-based Activities including the mitigation of marine and coastal litter. In the longer run, NOWPAP may adopt activities aimed at the protection of marine and coastal biodiversity, sustainable development, integrated coastal and river basin management, ecosystem-based management, etc. NOWPAP will serve as a regional platform for the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other global programmes and initiatives concerning the sustainable management of the marine and coastal environment.

*Dr Eirik Adler, Interim Coordinator for NOWPAP (2000-2004),
Coordinator, Regional Seas Programme, UNEP*

Pacific

The sea has always been an intrinsic part of life for the people from the 21 island states and territories of the Pacific. The Pacific Ocean provides food, transport, and a source of pride and identity for her five million Pacific island inhabitants.

Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian cultures have all traditionally emphasized wise resource use and environmental stewardship. However, industrialization, urban drift and rapid population growth threaten our many ecosystems that were once largely unspoiled and sustainable. Habitats



are rapidly being destroyed by logging and agriculture. The marine environment is being polluted from both land- and sea-based sources, fish and wildlife are being over-harvested, invasive species are pushing out native biota, and climate-induced sea level rise threatens to drown our low-lying islands and coasts.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), a regional intergovernmental organization now based in Apia, Samoa, was



AS POLAR ICE MELTS, LOW-LYING COASTLANDS IN THE PACIFIC ARE BEING FLOODED BY RISING SEA LEVEL. PICTURED: BORA BORA, FRENCH POLYNESIA. TRUCHET/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

initially established in 1982 as a programme of the South Pacific Commission to confront these threats. SPREP is the primary regional organization concerned with environmental management in the Pacific, and serves as the Secretariat for three Conventions.

Our Action Plan is reviewed by member countries and territories every four years, and has identified four broad priorities for the region: natural resources management, pollution prevention, facing up to climate change and variability, and sustainable economic development. The 1986 Noumea (or SPREP) Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific region entered into force in 1990. The 1976 Convention on the Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific called the Apia Convention came into force in 1990. It deals with protected areas, representative samples of natural ecosystems, geological formations, and sites of aesthetic, historic cultural or scientific value. The 1995 Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (Waigani Convention) entered into force in 2001.

As we look ahead, our priorities remain broadly the same as those identified four years ago, the maintenance of our unique environment to support the sustainable development of our islands for the benefit of our current and future generations.

However, two challenges stand out. One is waste management. This has an enormous impact on the region's health and tourism potential. With few options for disposal and tiny landmasses, waste minimization and the proper disposal of all types of waste – whether solid, household or hazardous – are critical. Countries need to put programmes or at least budgets in place to support or develop current infrastructure, and to look at ways to overhaul many current waste management practices. Unless waste management is given priority, the way of life for communities, located mainly on tiny landmasses, will become more difficult. Climate change and sea-level rise is an even greater problem that threatens not only sustainable development but possibly the very survival of low-lying atolls. Our region is already witnessing more frequent and intense extreme weather events. The challenge for the region is to develop and implement appropriate, affordable, and cost-effective adaptation measures with very limited resources.

We also manage the International Waters Project (IWP) funded by the GEF. The IWP is a five-year programme dedicated to enhancing global environment benefits, through two components: oceanic and coastal. Collectively the focus is on the management and conservation of tuna stocks and Integrated Coastal Watershed Management.

As SPREP continues its pursuit of environmentally sound sustainable development throughout the region, we will pay particular attention to the challenges of trade liberalization, globalization, tourism development, population growth, the impact of genetically modified organisms, urbanization and settlement patterns.

We are still developing appropriate policy and legal frameworks for action at national and regional levels, but are confident that the actions of the international community, through instruments such as the 2005 Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, will reflect the needs and challenges facing all Pacific islanders today.

We are working particularly hard to strengthen environmental education and awareness raising, so that all our people, who are characterized by both resilience and fortitude, can be empowered to safeguard their natural resources, lifestyles and economic development.

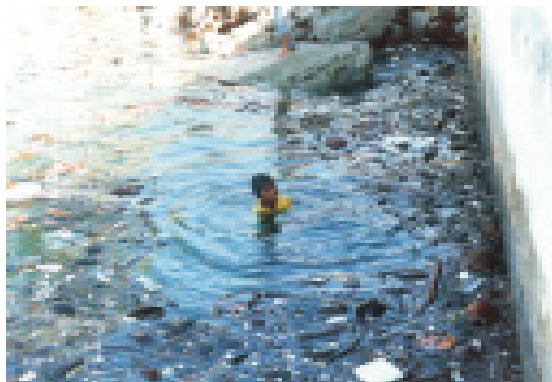
Mr Asterio Takesy, Director, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Red Sea & Gulf of Aden

In geological terms the Red Sea is a young ocean. Created through separation of the Arabian plate from Africa, and located in a predominantly arid latitudinal zone, the biodiversity that has evolved is unique and wonderful. The region supports world-renowned coral reefs, lush mangroves and fertile seagrass beds. It is home to endemic species of seabirds, reef fish and invertebrates.

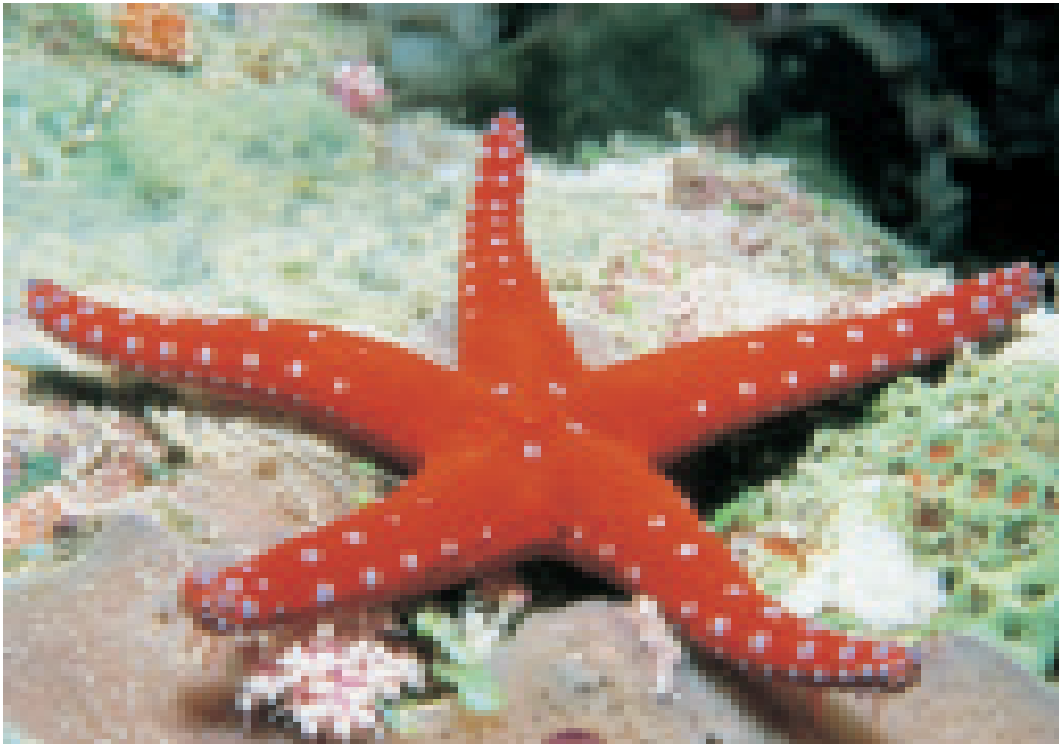
Concern for the preservation of this beauty and the natural resources of the region can be traced back to 1974 when ALECSO initiated a programme for the region. In 1982 the plenipotentiaries of the governments in the region signed the Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment, otherwise known as the Jeddah Convention, together with its associated Protocol.

The main focus of the Convention is the prevention, reduction and fight against pollution. In accordance with the Convention, a new Secretariat, the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the



MAJURO CHILD IN A POLLUTED SEA. SPREP





SEA STAR, ONE OF THE COLOURFUL SPECIES OF THE RED SEA. PERSGA

Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) was formally announced in 1995 with its headquarters in Jeddah.

From 1999 to 2003 PERSGA was the executing agency for the Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, funded through the GEF, implementing agencies (UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank), the Islamic Development Bank, and the PERSGA Member States. This Programme has provided a framework for long-term conservation and management of coastal and marine resources. Guided by a Regional Task Force and Working Groups consisting of expert representatives from each of the PERSGA Member States, the Programme has integrated several complementary components, such as the Reduction of Navigation Risks and Marine Pollution, Sustainable Use and Management of Living Marine Resources, Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation, Development of a Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas, Support for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), and Enhancement of Public Awareness and Participation.

Recent achievements have seen a new vessel traffic separation scheme put into operation in the southern Red Sea with the approval of IMO. A regionally standardized system for the collection of fisheries data has been prepared and two regional training centres have been established to promote the sustainable use of transboundary fisheries stocks through cooperative management. Surveys have been carried out to assess the regional status of mangroves, turtles and breeding seabirds and regional Action Plans have been developed for their future conservation. Public awareness and community participation through school environmental clubs have been established within the region. PERSGA has also prepared a Regional Programme of Action for the prevention of pollution from land-based activities and is executing two national Programmes of Action.

Future activities include a Regional Environmental Monitoring Programme in cooperation with the Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Action Plan and the IAEA Marine Environment Laboratory. A Regional Marine Emergency Mutual Aid Centre (MEMAC) is being established in Hurghada to coordinate activities in the event of oil spills and a Contingency Planning Action Plan is being put into effect. Steps have been taken towards the creation of a Regional Commission for Fisheries; and a network of marine protected areas is being created throughout the region.

HISTORY

The Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment was adopted in 1982 and entered into force in 1985.

The Protocol Concerning Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency was adopted in 1982 and entered into force in 1985.

The Action Plan for the Conservation of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden was adopted in 1982.

A new Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden was launched in December 1998.

A draft Protocol Concerning the Conservation of Biological Diversity and the Establishment of Protected Areas and a draft Protocol on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Sources of Pollution in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden have been reviewed by Member States and will be signed by Plenipotentiaries very soon.

PERSGA has prepared a new strategy and vision for the future underpinned by the Rio Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. This new policy seeks to build partnerships that will support continued conservation efforts in the region leading to sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

Dr Abdelelah A. Banajah, Secretary General, PERSGA

ROPME Sea Area

The ROPME Sea Areas covers eight states that joined forces in 1978 to adopt the Kuwait Regional Convention for Cooperation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution (Kuwait Convention) and four associated Protocols.

In the same year an Action Plan for the region was adopted covering programme activities relating to oil pollution, industrial wastes, sewage and marine resources. Projects range from coastal area management, fisheries, public health, land-based activities, sea-based pollution, biodiversity, oceanography, marine emergencies, GIS and remote sensing to environmental awareness and capacity building. A year later in





ROPME

In 1979 the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) was established and later became the Secretariat for the Kuwait Convention and Action Plan in 1982.

The Kuwait Convention and its Protocols have made a substantial positive impact on the protection of the marine environment and coastal areas from pollution. However, the tasks are huge and the region is still faced with major environmental challenges. The ROPME Sea Area suffers particularly from the impacts of haphazard coastal developments, physical alterations, destruction of habitats, sedimentation, high salinity, and extremes of temperature. It contains a great number of land-based and sea-based pollution 'hot spots'.

The impacts of land-based activities on the region's coastal waters are significant. Municipal sewage and industrial effluents from such industries as petroleum refineries, power, desalination and petrochemical plants are major contributors to pollution loads. Dredging and reclamation activities are also a permanent feature in many coastal areas, with tremendously damaging effects on the marine environment.

Operational and accidental oil pollution is another major challenge in the region. The impacts on the marine environment by offshore oil installations, particularly water, is enormous. The operational pollution from ships and dumping of ballast water are also among the main causes of chronic oil pollution in the region. To this effect, the establishment of reception facilities for oily wastes and other wastes is of high priority, as is the protection of water quality in the vicinity of water intakes. There are also a great number of oil spill emergencies resulting in substantial pollution to the marine environment. A Regional Marine Emergency Mutual Aid Centre (MEMAC) was established in 1982 in Bahrain to assist in combating pollution by oil and other harmful substances and to coordinate and facilitate information exchange, technological cooperation and training.

Recent military conflicts and remnants of hundreds of shipwrecks have seriously affected the northern part of the ROPME Sea Area. This pressing environmental challenge should be urgently addressed in a concerted effort with international support and cooperation. In addition, the draining of the Marshlands of Mesopotamia has posed serious threats to the wildlife and to the ecological balance of vast areas, affecting water quality and the spawning grounds of shrimp and migratory species of fish. Successive satellite images have depicted the transformation of a one-time haven for migratory

birds and a major fisheries resource into an arid, barren land.

Both anthropogenic and climatic stresses are a continuous threat to the marine ecosystems and to the great biodiversity of species that depend on them. Fish and corals are more susceptible to environmental stresses and respond to changes quickly. Coral bleaching and fish mortality episodes are now familiar phenomena in the ROPME Sea Area.

To address these environmental challenges, a series of research and monitoring projects are being carried out and many programme activities for the prevention, abatement and combating of pollution and environmental degradation are being developed and implemented.

Drafts of the Protocol Concerning the Conservation of Biological Diversity and the Establishment of Protected Areas and a Concept Paper on Biodiversity have been prepared. These documents were reviewed in the Legal/Technical Experts Meeting of ROPME Contracting States in December 2002, July 2004 and September 2004, respectively.

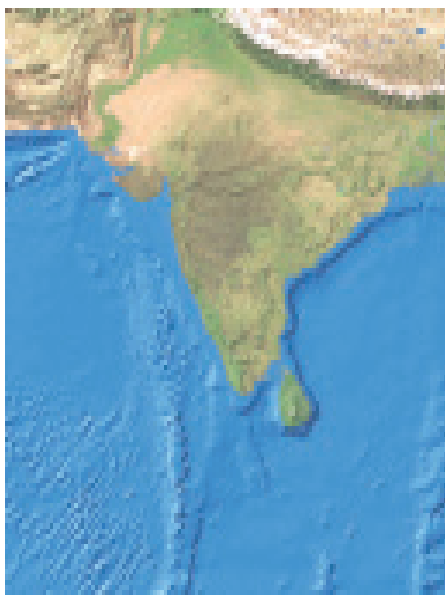
HISTORY

Kuwait Regional Convention for Cooperation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution, adopted in 1978, entered into Force in 1979. Associated Protocols:

- Concerning Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, adopted in 1978, entered into force in 1979.
- Concerning Marine Pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf, adopted in 1989, entered into force in 1990.
- For the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution from Land-Based Sources, adopted in 1990, entered into force in 1993.
- On the Control of Marine Transboundary Movements and Disposal of Hazardous Wastes and other Wastes, adopted in 1998.

Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Areas of Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, adopted in 1978 and entered into force in 1979.

Dr Abdul Rahman Al-Awadi, Executive Secretary, Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME)



South Asian Seas

The South Asian Seas (SAS) region can be categorized into two distinct geographical groups. While Maldives and Sri Lanka are island nations, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are situated on the Asian mainland. The region has some of the largest and most biologically rich marine ecosystems, such as the Gulf of Mannar, Atolls of Maldives and Mangroves of Sundarbans. The presence of perennial rivers such as the Brahmaputra, Ganges, Godavari, Indus, Kelani, Magna, etc. have contributed to large networks of backwaters, estuaries, salt marshes and mangroves. The region also provides habitats for endangered marine turtles, for example the Green and Olive Ridley turtles. Some of the largest coastal lagoons of the world, such as Chilka Lake in India and Puttalam lagoon in Sri Lanka, are located within the region. It has one of the world's finest coral

ecosystems, with atolls constituting the entire country of Maldives. The Lakshadweep and Nicobar group of islands of India and a few regions of Sri Lanka have fringing reefs.

Our current priorities have not changed significantly. The risk of losing a member country, namely, the Maldives due to changing climate and rising seas looms large on the horizon. Our Action Plan has mandated us to focus specifically on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), Development and Implementation of National and Regional Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Planning, Human Resources Development through Strengthening Regional Centres of Excellence and Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. This however does not preclude us from venturing into other areas.

The scope of ICZM for the SAS is being expanded to promote the Integrated Coastal Area & River Basin Management (ICARM) concept, which we are currently implementing through a pilot project in Sri Lanka, which hopefully will lead to greater activity in this area. Activities are also planned for the Conservation and Integrated Management of Marine Turtles in collaboration with IOSEA Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The SAS Secretariat has worked with a number of coral reef initiatives to promote the better management of the region's coral reefs. Significant training programmes have taken place and many more are also planned with respect to aspects of maritime conventions such as OPRC and MARPOL

73/78. We have worked for a several years to develop a Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan. The South Asian Seas Programme (SASP) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) are working towards a Regional Action Plan for South Asia in connection with the Globallast Programme.

Given that land-based sources are the main causes of marine pollution, protecting the seas also requires addressing land-based issues. The SAS Secretariat functions as the regional node for GPA programming activities and has engaged in facilitating activities to achieve the objectives aimed at minimizing land-based pollution. Many major initiatives have been undertaken under these areas of work, such as the formulation of the Regional Plan of Action for GPA 2003-2006 and work in the area of National Action Programme.

The SAS Secretariat has been collaborating to take forward the activities of the Global



TOP: MONITORING IN DUTCH BAY IN TRINCOMALEE, SRI LANKA. ARJAN RAJASURIYA
BOTTOM: MAPPING CORAL KILLED BY RISING SEA TEMPERATURE.
F.NAUMANN/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

International Waters Assessment (GIWA) in the Bay of Bengal sub-region along with UNEP, GEF and Kalmar University of Sweden. Also in the pipeline is the finalization of a three-year Project on Development of Harmonized National Environmental Quality Criteria for Seawater for the South Asian Seas (SEAQUAL) with the Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA).’

Along with the other Regional Seas programmes, we find ourselves confronted with the great challenges and opportunities offered by the new information technologies, and in this regard we will be working with UNEP’s World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) to develop our own capacities as well as those of our member countries.

As mandated from the Regional Seas Strategic Directions agreed upon at the 5th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Secretariats, SASP will encourage and assist countries to implement their responsibilities towards different global and regional conventions as they relate to the Regional Seas, in a coherent and coordinated manner.

SASP has been a strong advocate of the need for cross linkages and the sharing of experiences between adjacent Regional Seas programmes. On this score we are pushing forward with our ties with the East Asian Seas Programme. Perhaps the first activity where both Secretariats will be involved will be the follow-up to the FAO Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project.

We still feel that Regional Activity Centres will be the cornerstone of a successful programme. As such, we are pursuing the idea of setting up such centres in each of our member countries, each dealing with one of our action plan priorities.

On 26 December 2004, the world saw the worst environmental catastrophe in living memory – the Asian tsunami. Our region was the worst affected, with four out of the five member countries very badly impacted. A UNEP-assisted Rapid Assessment is currently under way in all of them to determine the environmental damage and the elements of a reconstruction process.

This disaster has raised many issues which need urgent attention. These include the need for an early warning system and a disaster preparedness plan for the region – not just for tsunamis but for all disasters, the need for adequate enforceable legislation, and the need for environmental awareness at levels.

HISTORY

At a High Level Meeting in February 1981, the Coastal and Island States of the South Asian Seas (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan & Sri Lanka) decided that within the context of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), a Regional Seas Programme should be developed.

In January 1982 SACEP became a ‘Legal Entity with minimum number of countries signing the Articles of Association of SACEP

The Tenth Session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) held in May 1982, requested the Executive Director in decision 10/20 “...to enter into consultation with the concerned States of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) to ascertain their views regarding the conduct of a Regional Seas Programme in the South Asian Seas”.

The Action Plan of the South Asian Regional Seas Programme was formally adopted at a Meeting of Plenipotentiaries of the concerned countries held in New Delhi, India on 24th March 1995 and came into force in January 1997 when all the member countries signed the Action Plan.

Mr Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardene, Interim Coordinator
for South Asian Seas, South Asia Cooperative
Environment Programme (SACEP)

South-East Pacific

The South-East Pacific region spans the entire length of the Pacific coast of South America from Panama to Cape Horn, encompassing tropical, sub-tropical, temperate and subantarctic systems. In spite of this astounding diversity, the region's five countries (Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Panama) find themselves united by two overwhelming natural phenomena known as Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) – that dominated by the cold, nutrient-rich Humboldt Current, with the largest up-welling system in the world supporting one of the world's most productive fishing grounds; and that of the Eastern Equatorial Pacific.

However, the region is under threat from coastal and marine degradation by land-based and marine-based sources of pollution and other forms of environmental degradation. In addition, the region is regularly disrupted by the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon, which originates in the equatorial Pacific, producing dramatic upheavals in local – and ultimately global – climatic conditions. El Niño influences everything from the weather to marine ecosystems to human livelihoods, and its enormous social and economic impacts are felt around the world.

In order to protect the rich marine and coastal environment of the region, the South-East Pacific Action Plan was adopted in 1981 together with the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zones of the South-East Pacific (Lima Convention) and its associated Protocols: Agreement on Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution in the South East Pacific by Hydrocarbons and other Harmful Substances in cases of Emergency; Protocol for the Protection of the South East Pacific Against Pollution from Land-Based Sources; Protocol for the Conservation and Management of Protected Marine and Coastal Areas of the South East Pacific; and the Protocol for the Protection of the South East Pacific from Radioactive Pollution. Considering that El Niño is

a disruption of the ocean atmosphere system in the tropical Pacific having severe socio-economic impacts in the South East Pacific Region, the CPPS Members Countries created in 1974 the Regional Study on El Niño Phenomenon (ERFEN), which from 1992 became a legally binding instrument as the Protocol on the Programme for the Regional Study of El Niño Phenomenon in the South East Pacific.

The Action Plan is implemented within the framework of inter-agency cooperation between the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS), UNEP and some two-dozen agencies, programmes and Convention Secretariats.

Future priorities for the region will focus on the full implementation of existing legally binding instruments, their programmes and specific action



CHILD STANDING IN SEWAGE PIPE, ECUADOR.
T.NEBBIA/UNEP/STILL PICTURES



TOURISTS ADMIRE GALAPAGOS SEA LIONS. IUCN/JIM THORSELL

plans, the implementation at the regional level of Agenda 21 (Chapter 17); the WSSD Plan of Implementation, and global environmental conventions to achieve sustainable use of marine resources (implementing of the code of conduct for responsible fisheries, FAO International Plans of Action, the Ecosystem Approach for the Fisheries Management), conservation and management of straddling fish stocks, protection of marine biodiversity, prediction of extreme weather events, integrated coastal zone management, and marine and coastal protected areas.

Given our vulnerability to the great oceanic phenomena of the southern Pacific, it is clear that we cannot fulfil the vision of our Action Plan working in isolation. We are promoting the establishment of twinning arrangement with Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans of the Pacific region, to cooperate in the protection of a more extensive area of the Pacific. If new partners and adequate financing can be found, our efforts may eventually embrace the entire Pacific basin and its vulnerable coastal communities with a mantle of sound environmental protection and management.

Mr Ulises Munaylla-Alarcón, Regional Coordinator (I) of the South East Pacific Action Plan, Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS)

HISTORY

Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the South-East Pacific adopted in 1981.

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the South-East Pacific, adopted in 1981, entered into force in 1986. Protocols:

- Agreement and Complementary Protocol on the Agreement for Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution in the South East Pacific by Hydrocarbons and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, adopted in 1983, entered into force in 1987.
- Protocol for the Protection of the South East Pacific Against Pollution from Land- Based Sources, adopted in 1983, entered into force in 1986.
- Protocol for the Conservation and Management of Protected Marine and Coastal Areas of the South East Pacific, adopted in 1989, entered into force in 1994.
- Protocol for the Protection of the South East Pacific from Radioactive Pollution, adopted in 1989, entered into force in 1995.

West and Central Africa

The ratification of the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention); and an associated Protocol concerning pollution by the Republic of South Africa in 2003, signalled a new beginning for the convention. The convention's geographical coverage has increased to cover 22 countries with over 14,000km of coastline from Mauritania in the North to South Africa in the southern extreme.

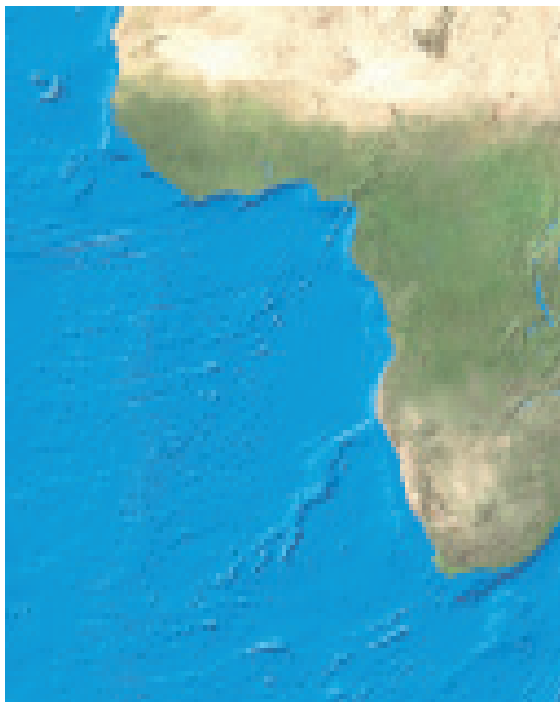
The coastal waters within the convention area contain highly productive ecosystems that support rich fisheries. The coastal area also supports coastal tourism, industries and numerous busy ports. These ecosystems provide an important livelihood for many coastal communities.

The region, however, has seen serious conflicts resulting in immense human suffering and poverty. In the last three decades or so, rapid development, improper use of resources and extensive pollution has impacted negatively on coastal ecosystems. Coastal erosion and floods are key problems, likely to be exacerbated by climate change. Destruction of critical habitats is wide spread in the convention area, and coastal communities are both the perpetrators and victims of this destruction.

The Abidjan Convention is among the earliest Regional Seas programmes forged in the early 1980s, first through an Action Plan and later by adoption of a Convention. After the Abidjan Convention came into force in 1984, projects on contingency planning, pollution control, coastal erosion,

environmental impact assessment and environmental legislation followed.

A number of difficulties, including competing priorities and lack of resources, resulted in slow progress in activities of the Abidjan Convention between 1990 and 2002. But today the Convention is back on track. Activities to re-energise the Convention include the establishment of a network of focal points which meet regularly in

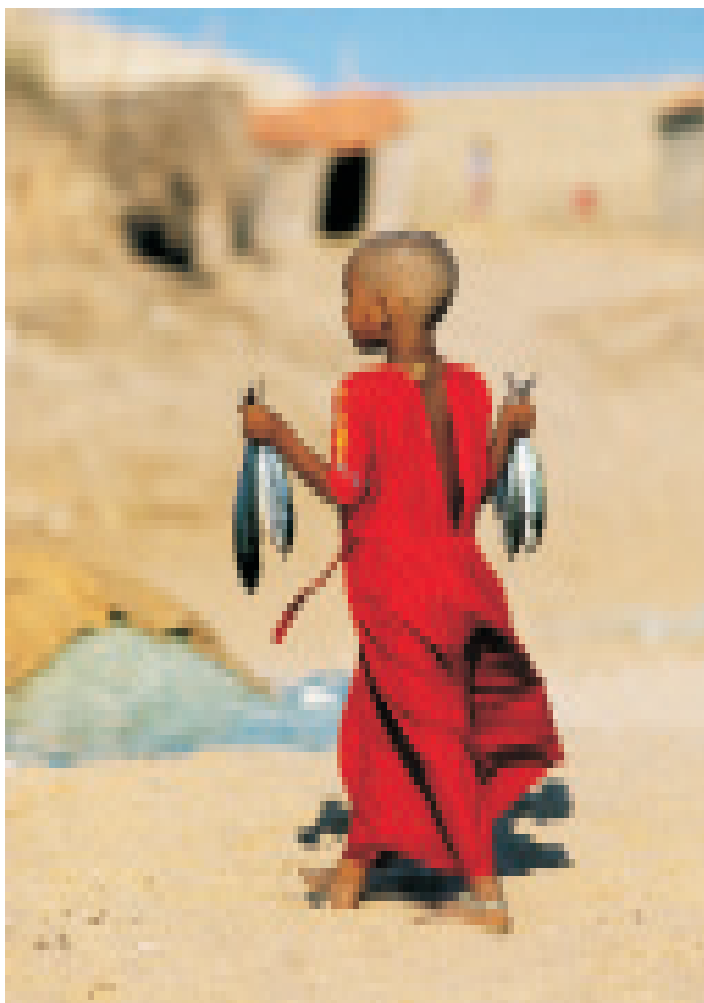


FISH CATCH IN MAURITANIA. ROJO-UNEP/STILL PICTURES

a Focal Points Forum each year. The focal points will prepare a new work programme.

The Seventh Conference of Parties (COP 7) in 2005 provided a turning point by establishing a new ecosystem-based coordination structure. Countries within each of the Benguela, Guinea and Canary current ecosystems will be coordinated as units or nodes of the Abidjan Convention.

The activities of the Abidjan Convention that are being coordinated directly by the Nairobi-based Joint Implementation Unit of the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions and the Abidjan-based Regional Coordination Unit, will increasingly be coordinated at the regional level through collaboration and partnership between the Convention and the GEF-sponsored Large Marine Ecosystem projects under implementation in the Convention area.



MAURITANIAN CHILD WITH FISH. DEMI/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

HISTORY

The Abidjan Convention was adopted in 1981 and entered into force in 1984.

The Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution in Cases of Emergency was adopted in 1981 and entered into force in 1984.

The Action Plan for the protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the West and Central African Region was adopted in 1981 and entered into force in 1984. The Republic of South Africa joined the Convention in 2003; consequently the name and geographical delineation will change to include South Africa's territorial waters and EEZ.

Armed with renewed political goodwill from the Contracting Parties, together with the opportunities presented through other initiatives such as the African Process for the Development and Management of the Coastal and Marine Resources and the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD), we can finally begin to fulfil the promise of our potentially rich and prosperous region and its natural splendours.

The Abidjan Convention also hopes to learn and benefit from the family of Regional Seas programmes such as the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) region.

*Mr Nassere Kaba, Interim-Coordinator,
Abidjan Convention, and
Mr Dixon Waruinge, Programme Officer,
Regional Seas, Nairobi and Abidjan
Conventions, UNEP*

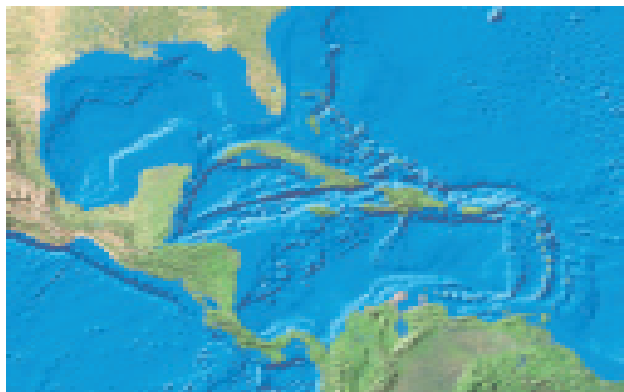
Wider Caribbean

The Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) has been under the watchful eye of the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) for over 20 years. Encompassing an area of strategic geographic importance to maritime and shipping activities for its 28 UN Member States, the WCR abounds with enchanting biodiversity as diverse as the Wider Caribbean's people and cultures. The critical dependence

of the Caribbean people on the marine and coastal resources for their economic livelihoods, however, requires that the management of these resources be given highest priority.

The CEP is governed by the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) as agreed by the countries of the WCR in 1983. The Cartagena Convention is a framework for regional cooperation whose specific areas of focus include protecting the marine environment from pollution from ships, dumping of wastes, land-based activities, seabed activities, airborne pollution and conservation of wildlife and specially protected areas. The Convention is supported by three Protocols which address specific environmental issues through cooperation in combating oil spills, managing specially protected areas and wildlife, and monitoring pollution from land-based sources and activities.

In keeping with its mission of promoting regional cooperation for the protection and development of the marine environment of the WCR, the CEP has remained relevant in addressing the changing environmental needs and concerns of the WCR. One such activity that embraces this concept is the Global Environment Facility (GEF) project to build partnerships in Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (IWCAM) for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This project addresses a number of water-related needs under the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of the SIDS (1994), which focuses on the interface between freshwater basins and coastal management of the island states. Formulated by UNEP and UNDP under the framework of the Cartagena Convention and expressly for SIDS, the IWCAM project supports legislative and policy reform at the island states level, capacity building to implement those reforms, and demonstration projects on key issues facing individual states.



CORAL REEF, DUTCH ANTILLES. J.KASSANCHUK/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

Activities under this project include groundwater supply protection and management, surface water supply protection and treatment, innovative sewage collection and treatment, watershed management, protection of coastal ecosystems, agricultural best practices implementation, establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and integrated coastal management in 'hot spots' of development pressure.

In its continued efforts to protect marine biodiversity in the WCR, the CEP is the regional contact point for the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and the designated lead organization

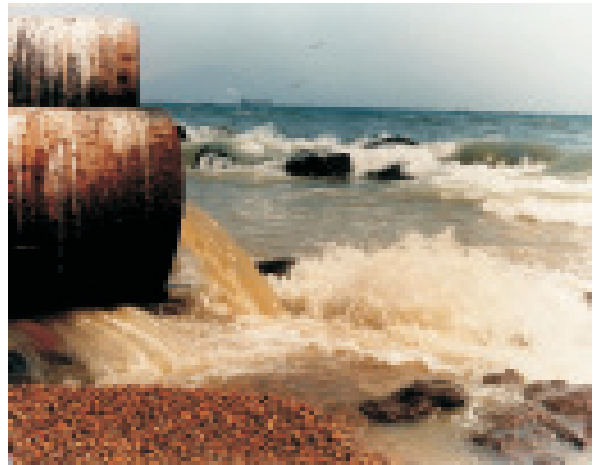
within the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) for WCR activities. A primary objective of ICRAN's Caribbean activities is to build the capacity on the ground for sustainable management of coral reefs, emphasizing the role of MPAs, local communities and the tourism sector. To this end, a number of regional and local activities are being implemented including the promotion of best management practices, training, coral reef monitoring and assessments, mapping of MPAs and their habitats, development of a MPA database, and public awareness building targeted mostly towards decision-makers and developers. An additional initiative within ICRAN is the Mesoamerican Reef Alliance (MAR) project, a partnership that relies on many individuals and organizations, including the private sector, working together to achieve a common goal for the benefit of the livelihoods of people and communities through improving the chances for the future health of coral reefs.

Additionally, the CEP is also Co-Chair of the White Water to Blue Water (WW2BW) Initiative which seeks to develop partnerships that would enhance integrated approaches in areas such as wastewater and sanitation, sustainable agricultural practices, integrated coastal management, sustainable tourism and environmentally sound marine transport in the WCR. WW2BW also provides for discussions

and information-sharing between potential partners from these different areas to collaborate on projects to be implemented in the WCR.

In spite of the challenges of institutional weakness, lack of financing, constrained human resources and other needed capacities, the CEP has endured the ebb and flow that come with working to protect the marine environment. Experience has taught that a coordinated framework of activities along with the provision of assistance is needed, in order to achieve sustainable development in the WCR. Cooperation among all stakeholders, including international partners, is a necessity because, as the CEP has demonstrated, environmental protection is everybody's concern. To this end, the CEP stands ready to continue efforts to facilitate local actions in response to the global environmental challenges.

*Mr Nelson Andrade Colmenares, Coordinator,
Caribbean Environment Programme, Regional
Coordinating Unit (CAR/RCU)*



WASTE POURS INTO CARIBBEAN WATERS. UNEP/DAVID TAPIA MUÑOZ

HISTORY

The Caribbean Action Plan was adopted in 1981.

The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region was adopted in 1983 and entered into force in 1986.

Associated Protocols concern:

- Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills, adopted in 1983, in force since 1986.
- Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA), adopted in 1990, in force since 2000.
- Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (LBS), adopted in 1999 (not yet in force).

Independent Partner Programmes

Antarctic

Antarctica is surrounded by a vast, unbroken and dynamic body of water known as the Southern Ocean, which constitutes about 15% of the world's total ocean surface. It is the only continent on Earth to be completely governed by its very own international agreement. The Antarctic Treaty was signed in 1959 by the 12 nations present in Antarctica at that time, who agreed to set aside their differences and work peacefully together to carry out scientific research. A further 31 nations signed the Treaty after it came into force in 1961, and it is still open to any member of the United Nations.



Since the first Consultative Meeting in Canberra in 1961, several measures have been adopted covering such areas as exchange of information, interchange of scientific personnel, preservation of historic sites, protection of specific areas, conservation of fauna and flora, conduct of tourists, mineral resources, and emergency assistance.

Antarctica's resources have been harvested for about 200 years. In many cases the intense level of exploitation resulted in the severe depletion of harvested stocks, as was the case for fur and elephant seals in the 19th century, and whales and finfish in the 20th century. The resulting concern for the



KING PENGUINS IN ANTARCTICA. ROBERT ANGELL/UNEP/STILL PICTURES

health of Antarctic ecosystems and its extraordinary marine and terrestrial life has kept environmental issues at the forefront ever since the Treaty was adopted.

In recent years there have been two milestones of particular relevance to the Regional Seas Programme. The first was the adoption of the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), which came into force in 1982. The Convention was primarily a response to concerns raised in the mid-1970s that an increase in krill catches in the Southern Ocean could have a serious effect on populations of krill and other marine life; particularly on birds, seals and fish which depend on krill for food. The Convention defines a Commission and a Scientific Committee to work together to manage marine living resources in the Southern Ocean.

In contrast to other multilateral fisheries conventions, CCAMLR is concerned not only with the regulation of fishing, but also has a mandate to conserve the ecosystem. This 'ecosystem approach', which considers the whole Southern Ocean to be a suite of interlinked systems, entails managing the resource while avoiding adverse effect on 'dependent and related species' and considering the status and health of the ecosystem. Key CCAMLR initiatives include monitoring of marine debris and its impact on marine animals including seals and seabirds, the CCAMLR Ecosystem Monitoring Programme (CEMP), and reduction of seabird by-catch in fisheries. Despite CCAMLR's success in pursuing its mandate, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, particularly for toothfish, continues to undermine its effectiveness.

The second milestone was the signing in 1991 of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, which, *inter alia*, establishes the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP). The Protocol entered into force on 14 January 1998 and it strives to maintain the general health of the Antarctic environment.

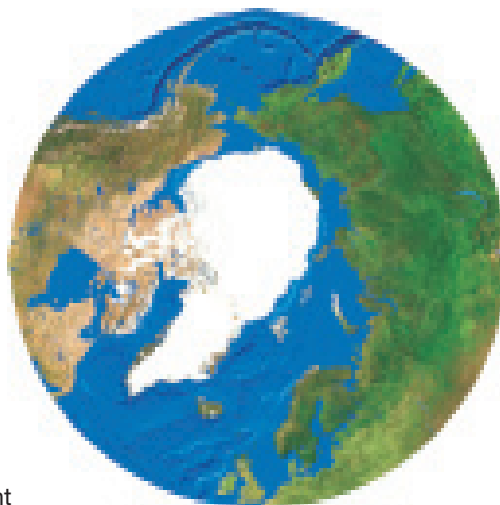
The importance of Antarctica for science, its mostly pristine environment, its remarkable marine life, and its abundant natural resources have ensured that environmental protection will always play a central role within the Antarctic Treaty system.

Dr Denzil Miller, Executive Secretary, CCAMLR Secretariat

Arctic

The Arctic is characterized by a harsh climate with extreme variation in light and temperature, short summers, extensive snow and ice cover in winter and large areas of permafrost. Its terrain varies from high mountains to flat plains, wide tundra and great expanses of sea, snow and ice. The plants and animals of the Arctic have adapted to these conditions, but this has rendered them in some cases more sensitive to increased human activities.

Historically, the harsh environment, difficulty of access to resources, and scattered nature of the population patterns has restricted rapid development and communication in the circumpolar Arctic region. In the past half-century, however, the rapid pace of technological and economic development in Arctic regions affects the culture and well-being of their human residents, including many indigenous peoples whose traditional way of life has been, until now, at least partially protected by the very nature of the remote and extreme environment in which they live.





MEN PADDLING BOAT THROUGH BREAKUP. PAME

The environmental, economic and socio-cultural changes occurring in the Arctic today are primarily driven by two key factors: climate change and increasing economic activity. To respond to these changes, the Arctic Council recognized that existing and emerging activities in the Arctic warrant a more coordinated and integrated strategic approach to address these challenges and agreed in 2002 that a strategic plan for protection of the Arctic marine environment be developed under PAME leadership. The Arctic Marine Strategic Plan was endorsed on November 24th 2004 at the 4th Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council. One of the aims of this plan is to build on the internationally recognized need to manage human activities within the context of entire ecosystems, applying them to achieve the sustainable development of the Arctic marine environment.

Previous climate change studies have concluded that the average temperature in the Arctic has already increased by more than twice the global average over the past 50 years and is projected to continue. These changes are resulting in increased use, opportunities and threats to the Arctic marine

HISTORY

The Arctic Council was established in 1996 and is a distinctive regional form of cooperation between governments and indigenous peoples in the Arctic region. It addresses all three of the main pillars of sustainable development: the environmental, social and economic. The scientific work and policy guidance of the Arctic Council is carried out in several expert working groups focusing on such issues as monitoring, assessing and preventing pollution in the Arctic, climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, in addition to emergency preparedness and prevention. Among these programmes is the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME).

The PAME (Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment) working group addresses policy and non-emergency pollution prevention and control measures with the long term goal of protecting the Arctic marine environment from land- and sea-based activities through coordinated action programmes and guidelines, complementing existing binding and non-binding arrangements.

and coastal environments. The estimated warming of the Arctic with a longer ice-free season is predicted to increase access to Arctic resources by providing a longer navigation period and opening the northern shipping route corridor linking Europe and Asia across the North Pole. At the same time it is expected that these warming trends will result in the accelerated release and distribution of harmful substances into the environment and alter habitat for terrestrial and marine species that can affect population levels and range, and change traditional food availability for Arctic populations.

While increased accessibility and marine transportation will require greater support and pose increased environmental risks, there will also be opportunities for social and economic development through increased investment and infrastructure, and improved access to goods, services and supplies. Several economic sectors, including mineral resource development, oil and gas development, tourism and commercial fishing, will also be advanced and made more competitive with improved access.

Soffia Gudmundsdottir, Executive Secretary, Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)

Baltic Sea

The Baltic is a young sea, and one of the world's most extraordinary for the beauty and variety of the marine environment and its surrounding landscapes. Since the last Ice Age these waters have at different times been a wide strait, a large bay, a lake and now an inland sea connected to the open ocean only by narrow straits. Water exchange with the open ocean is slow, and salinity varies considerably both between different waters and over time.



The Baltic is nevertheless home to many species of plants, animals and micro-organisms in a great variety of different habitats. Most of these are at risk from human activity, and many Baltic fish populations are now thought to be dangerously low.

Among the main threats are eutrophication caused primarily by excess nitrogen and phosphorus in the water; pollution by hazardous substances including pesticides, heavy metals and industrial wastes; habitat destruction; and the introduction of alien invasive species.

In 1974 the Baltic Sea States signed the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, otherwise known as the Helsinki Convention. This was a pioneering agreement on many fronts. It was the first regional agreement ever to cover all sources of pollution, whether from land, sea or air.

In its first two decades, the Convention oversaw considerable progress, including improvements in the sanitary conditions of previously polluted water, significant reductions in discharges of organochlorine compounds from industry and of lead emissions from land-transport, and rehabilitation of some formerly seriously endangered living species.

In 1992, a new Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area was signed by all the countries bordering on the Baltic Sea and by the European Economic Community. The Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) is the governing body of the Convention.



HELSINKI, FINLAND. HELCOM

Also, in 1992 the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP) was established. One important action under the JCP is the identification and cleaning up of serious pollution areas; the so-called 'hot spots'. Since then 51 of the 132 'hot spots' identified around the Baltic Sea have been cleaned up. Nevertheless, concentrations of PCBs and DDT remain much higher in the Baltic than in the North Sea or the open Atlantic Ocean. HELCOM put a Hazardous Substances Project team to work in 1998 to reduce discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea drainage basin through 2020, and selected 42 hazardous substances for immediate priority action. In 2004 an updated strategy on hazardous substances was adopted.

Crisscrossed by some of the busiest shipping routes in the world, the Baltic remains under permanent threat from maritime pollution incidents. In September 2001 nine Baltic countries and the EU launched an extensive package of measures – the HELCOM Copenhagen Declaration – to ensure the safety of navigation and a swift national and trans-national response to maritime pollution incidents.

In 2003 a HELCOM Ministerial meeting decided that all HELCOM actions must be based on an

HISTORY

The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area was adopted in 1974 and entered into force in 1980. It was replaced in 1992 and entered into force in 2000 with these annexes:

- Annex I. Harmful substances
- Annex II. Criteria for the use of Best Environmental Practice and Best Available Technology
- Annex III. Criteria and measures concerning the prevention of pollution from LBS
- Annex IV. Prevention of pollution from ships
- Annex V. Exemptions from the general prohibition of dumping of waste and other matter in the Baltic Sea Area
- Annex VI. Prevention of pollution from offshore activities
- Annex VI. Response to pollution incidents.

ecosystem approach to the management of human activities. To facilitate this development, Ecological Quality Objectives that express 'good quality status' are being developed. For the foreseeable future, the focus of HELCOM's work will be to limit discharges of nutrients and hazardous substances from land-based activities, prevent pollution by shipping, ensure response to accidents at sea, conserve natural habitats and biological diversity, and bring about the long-term restoration of the ecological balance of the Baltic Sea.

Ms Anne Christine Brusendorff, Executive Secretary, Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)

Caspian Sea

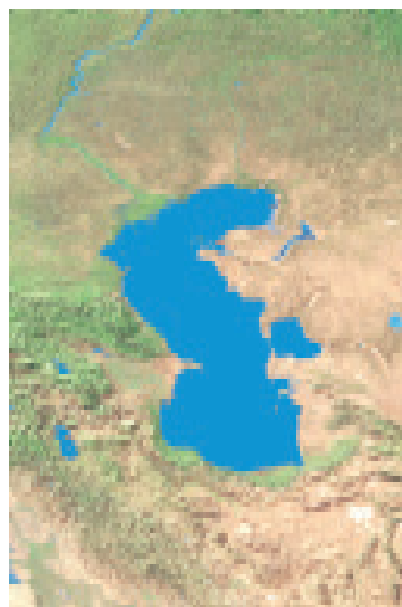
The Caspian Environment Programme (CEP) represents a partnership between the five littoral states of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Turkmenistan, and several International partners: EU, GEF, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. The overall goal of the CEP is to promote the sustainable development and management of the Caspian environment in order to obtain the optimal long-term benefits for the human population of the region. Sustainable human development and management will protect human health, maintain ecological integrity and support the region's economic and environmental viability for future generations.

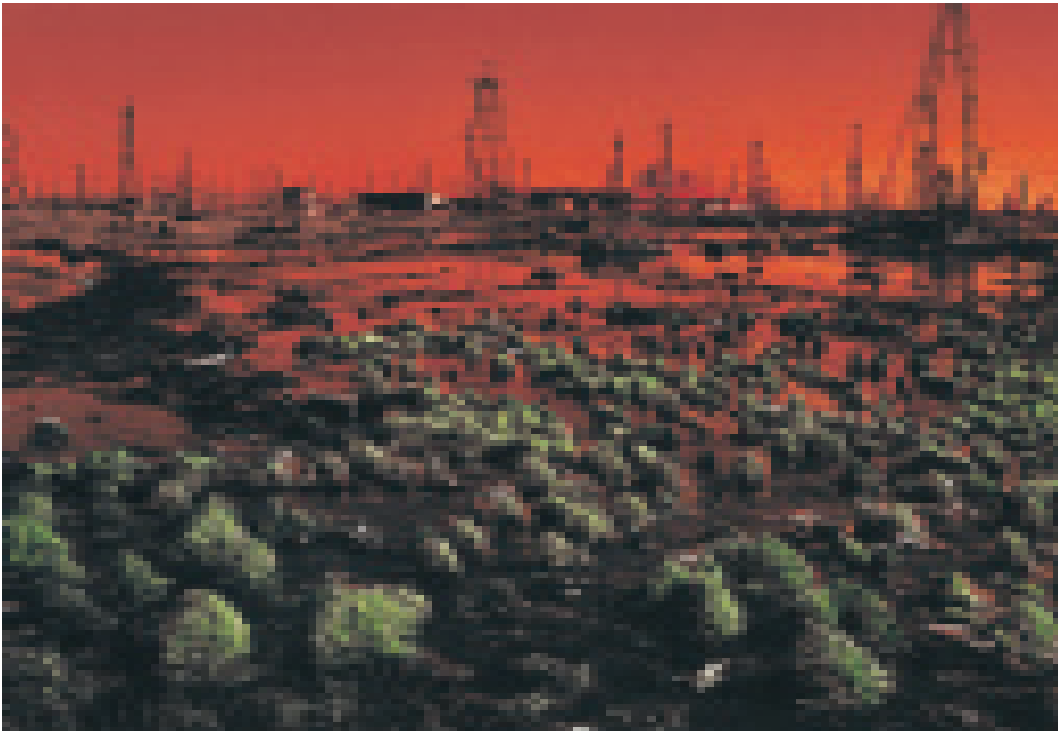
During the first phase of CEP the goals of the GEF/UNDP/UNOPS project were (1) creation of a regional coordination mechanism to achieve sustainable development and management of the Caspian environment, (2) completion of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) of priority environmental issues to guide the necessary environmental actions, and (3) formulation and endorsement of a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and adoption of National Caspian Action Plans (NCAPs). The first phase was conducted from 1998 to 2003 and involved copious input from all of the Caspian States, which expressed continued support for a single, regional structure that will coordinate initiatives to address regional environmental issues associated with the Caspian Sea.

The countries are anxious to further strengthen and begin implementation of the SAP, where the fruits of their hard labour during the first phase of the CEP will become evident. The second phase of CEP, which started in 2003, will witness the continued transition to enhanced governance and execution of the Programme by the littoral states themselves with international partners including GEF and the EU/TACIS. GEF will focus on pollution monitoring and abatement, biodiversity protection and the issue of invasive species. EU/TACIS will focus on the sustainable development of coastal communities.

The Caspian countries have demonstrated their commitment to protecting and restoring the Caspian environment by signing the Framework Convention and by the approval of the Caspian Strategic Action Programme in November 2003 in Tehran, and by effectively pursuing the completion of the endorsement process of their NCAPs in accordance with established procedures. The Convention ratification procedure is expected to be finalized by 2005. In addition to strong national support, continuation of the CEP is encouraged by the private sector active within the region which is expected to further increase its support.

The Caspian littoral countries are cognizant of an array of environmental, socio-economic, legislative, and institutional challenges if they are to reach their objectives. They are also conscious of





OIL PLATFORMS AND POLLUTION IN THE CASPIAN SEA. UNEP/FARID KHAYRULIN, COURTESY OF CEP

HISTORY

1995: Fact finding mission by UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank to the region.

1998: CEP is launched by littoral countries with support from GEF and EU/Tacis.

1998-1999: Programme Coordination Unit is established in Baku, Azerbaijan.

2000-2002: TDA, NCAPS and SAP are formulated.

2003: The Caspian Framework Convention is signed in Tehran in November.

2003: International partners approve continuation of support to the CEP.

2004: Programme Coordination Unit moves to Tehran. The 2nd phase of CEP starts in full.

The Caspian Convention is ratified by Turkmenistan and Russia and is expected to be ratified by others shortly.

potential barriers to success and alternative strategies have been developed in order to avoid the obstacles. Over the past decade the environment of the Caspian region has attracted media, political and global attention. The attention has not always been positive, though it has created an awareness of pending environmental problems that must be addressed in the region.

In the first phase of CEP four major transboundary issues of environmental concern were identified with regards to anthropogenic impacts on the Caspian waters – specifically, the need to protect and conserve biodiversity and reduce impacts of invasive species, to reduce levels of persistent toxic substances, to address sustainable use of bio-resources including fisheries, and to enhance sustainable coastal development.

The Caspian Sea is the largest enclosed water body on Earth and given its volume and flushing rate there will be a considerable lag between managed interventions and the hoped-for improvements in environmental conditions. All parties must understand that a period of little apparent progress is a natural feature of the water system and should not be interpreted as a failure of remedial activities.

*Mr Hamid Ghaffarzadeh, Project Manager,
Caspian Environment Programme*

North-East Atlantic

The North-East Atlantic region stretches from the coast of Greenland eastward to the North Sea, and from the North Pole southward to the Straits of Gibraltar. Its habitats range from tidal mud flats to steep cliffs, from shallow estuaries to the deep seabed. Its ecosystems range from kelp forests to seagrass beds to deep cold-water coral reefs. The sea is rich in marine life, and the air above includes the East Atlantic Flyway, a migratory route for millions of birds who use the coasts for feeding and nesting.



We face threats through pollution, from the land, shipping and offshore installations, through pressures on fish stocks from over fishing, through coastal development and even through exploiting the seabed for sand and gravel.

The grounding of the Torrey Canyon in 1967, which released 117,000 tonnes of oil with disastrous consequences for the environment, was a pivotal point for international cooperation to combat marine pollution in the North-East Atlantic. The Oslo Convention was adopted in 1972 to prevent the dumping of hazardous substances at sea, and was soon followed by the Paris Convention (1974) dealing with land-based sources. These were merged and modernized by the 1992 Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention), which entered into force on 25 March 1998.

The new Convention included the 'precautionary principle'; the 'polluter pays principle'; best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practice (BEP), including clean technology. Its Annexes deal with the prevention and elimination of pollution from land-based sources, by dumping or

incineration and from offshore sources; and with assessment of the quality of the marine environment. The most recent Annex (1998) on the Protection and Conservation of Ecosystems and Biological Diversity of the Maritime Area entitles the OSPAR Commission to protect the marine environment of the North East Atlantic from kinds of human activities (subject to limitations in respect of fisheries management and shipping).

The Convention's implementing body, the OSPAR Commission, brings together 15 countries, the European Community, and observers from 17 intergovernmental organizations and from 30 non-governmental organizations, representing both environmental groups and industry.

In 1998/99 the OSPAR Commission agreed five long-term strategies: the protection and conservation of ecosystems and biological diversity, the cessation of discharges of hazardous substances, progressive and substantial reductions in discharges of radioactive substances; combating eutrophication, and controlling offshore activities. These strategies were revised by our Second Ministerial Meeting in 2003, and will determine the focus

HISTORY

1972 Oslo Convention

1974 Paris Convention

1983 First North Sea Conference (Bremen)

1987 Second North Sea Conference (London)

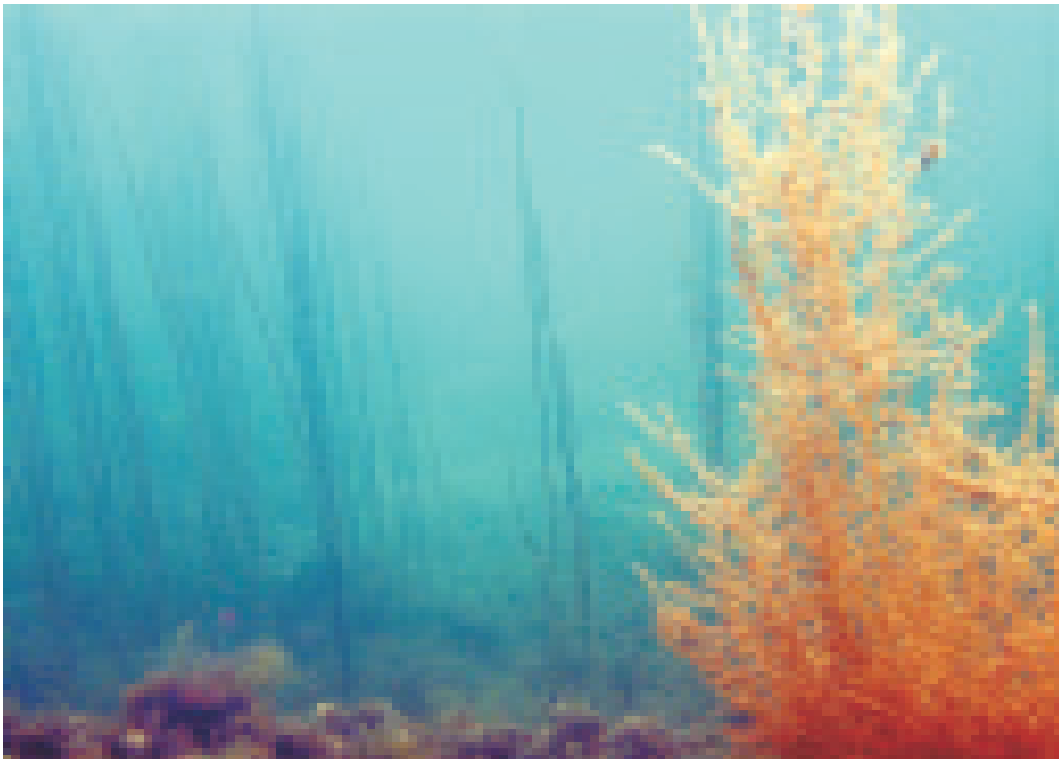
1990 Third North Sea Conference (The Hague)

1995 Fourth North Sea Conference (Esberg)

1998 First Ospar Ministerial Meeting (Sintra)

2002 Fifth North Sea Conference (Oslo)

2003 Second Ospar Ministerial Meeting (Bremen)



UNDERWATER SCENE, KIMMERIDGE BAY, UK. OSPAR/ADAM PHAROAH

of our work over the next decade, during which time we shall track their implementation through a sixth strategy for the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP).

The first joint Ministerial meeting of the OSPAR Commission and the Helsinki Commission (for the Baltic region) was held in Bremen, 2003. This was the first of its kind and demonstrated the depth of political commitment across the whole of Europe to protecting our seas. Three themes were particularly stressed:

- ▶ First, the need for an ecosystem approach to the management of human activities that affect the regions. Only by looking at the way in which the whole ecosystem may be affected by policies and decisions can we be sure that we are acting sustainably.
- ▶ Second, the European Union's initiative for a European Marine Strategy and the need for a clear route-map on how all the many authorities, national and international, should collaborate to protect the seas. The Helsinki and OSPAR Commissions have set out in detail what they can contribute to a European Marine Strategy, and the Ministers have welcomed the opportunity to work on its development and adoption.
- ▶ Third, the need for joint action to protect threatened and declining species and habitats. The aim is to create by 2010 an ecologically coherent network of well managed marine protected areas covering the North-East Atlantic and the Baltic Sea. OSPAR has identified an initial list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats.

But this cannot be the whole story. As the Torrey Canyon disaster taught us more than three decades ago, we have to expect the unexpected, and always be on the lookout for emerging new problems. Two such new issues derive from the need to find energy sources that do not worsen the problem of greenhouse gases. These are the environmental implications of offshore installations for wind- and wave-energy, and of the sequestration in the seabed of carbon dioxide produced from fossil fuels.

Mr Alan Simcock, Executive Secretary, OSPAR Commission

Regional Seas Action Plans, Conventions and Protocols

Baltic Sea

Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (the Helsinki Convention), 1992, entered into force 2000
Seven Annexes: Annex I Harmful substances; Annex II Criteria for the use of Best Environmental Practice and Best Available Technology; Annex III Criteria and measures concerning the prevention of pollution from LBS; Annex IV Prevention of pollution from ships; Annex V Exemptions from the general prohibition of dumping of waste and other matter in the Baltic Sea Area; Annex VI Prevention of pollution from offshore activities; Annex VI Response to pollution incidents
Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP) (1992)

Black Sea

Black Sea Environment Programme adopted 1993-1996
Strategic Action Plan adopted 1996 and amended 2002
Bucharest Convention signed 1992, entered into force 1994
Protocol on Protection of the Black Sea Marine Environment Against Pollution from Land-based Sources adopted 1992, in force 1994; Protocol on Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Black Sea Marine Environment by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Emergency Situations adopted 1992, in force 1994; Protocol on Protection of the Black Sea Marine Environment against Pollution by Dumping adopted 1992, in force 1994; Protocol on Black Sea Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation signed 2003

Wider Caribbean

Caribbean Action plan adopted 1981
Cartagena Convention adopted 1983, in force 1986
Protocol concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills adopted 1983, in force 1986; Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife adopted 1990, in force 2000; Protocol concerning Land-based sources of pollution adopted 1999, not yet in force

East Asian Seas

East Asian Seas Action plan adopted 1981, revised 1994
Long term strategies (1987-96) for the EAS Action Plan adopted 1987
Long-term strategy of the Coordinating Body on the Sea of East Asia: COBSEA (1994-2009) adopted 1994
Long-term plan "Vision and Plan – A Systematic Approach" adopted 1999

Eastern Africa

East African Action Plan adopted 1985, in force 1996
Nairobi Convention adopted 1985, in force 1996
Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wild Fauna and Flora in the Eastern African Region adopted 1985, in force 1996; Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Marine Pollution in Cases of Emergency in the Eastern African Region, adopted 1985, in force 1996

Mediterranean

Action plan adopted 1975, revised 1995
Barcelona Convention adopted 1976, in force 1978; amended 1995 and amended version in force 2004
Strategic Action Programme to address Pollution from Land-based Activities adopted 1997
Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity adopted 2003
Prevention and Elimination of Pollution by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea, adopted 1976, in force 1978, amended 1995 (amendments not yet in force); Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities, adopted 1980, in force 1983, amended 1996 (amendments not yet in force); Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, adopted 1982, in force 1986, amended 1995, in force 1999; Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea, adopted 1976, in force, amended 2002 (amendments not yet in force); Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil, adopted 1994 (not yet entered into force); Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, adopted 1996, not yet in force

North-East Pacific Action Plan adopted 2002

Antigua Convention adopted 2002
Priority Programs (PP) approved 2002

North-West Pacific

North West Pacific Action Plan adopted 1994
NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan adopted 2003

Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

Action Plan adopted 1976, revised 1995
Strategic Action Programme (1999)
Jeddah Convention adopted 1982, in force 1985
Protocol Concerning Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency adopted 1982, in force 1985

ROPME Sea Area

Action plan adopted 1978
Kuwait Convention adopted 1978, entered into force 1979
Protocols: Concerning Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, adopted 1978, in force 1979; Concerning Marine Pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf, adopted 1989, in force 1990; For the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution from Land-Based Sources, adopted 1990, in force 1993; On the Control of Marine Transboundary Movements and Disposal of Hazardous Wastes and other Wastes, adopted 1998

Pacific

Action Plan adopted 1982
Noumea (or SPREP) Convention adopted 1982, in force 1990
Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution of the Pacific region by Dumping adopted 1986, in force 1990;
Protocol concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution Emergencies in the Pacific region adopted 1986, in force 1990

South Asian Seas

Action plan adopted 1995

South-East Pacific

Action plan adopted 1981
Lima Convention adopted 1981, in force 1986
Agreement and Complementary Protocol for Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution in the South East Pacific by Hydrocarbons and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, adopted 1983, in force 1987; Protocol for the Protection of the South East Pacific Against Pollution from Land- Based Sources, adopted in 1983, in force 1986; Protocol for the Conservation and Management of Protected Marine and Coastal Areas of the South East Pacific, adopted in 1989, in force 1984; Protocol for the Protection of the South East Pacific from Radioactive Pollution, adopted 1989, in force 1995

West and Central Africa

Action plan adopted 1981, in force 1984
Abidjan Convention adopted 1981, in force 1984
Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution in Cases of Emergency adopted 1981, in force 1984

Arctic

Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Land-based Activities adopted 1998
Arctic Marine Strategic Plan 2004 and Work Plans as approved by ministerial meetings

Antarctic

Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) in force 1982

Caspian Sea

Strategic Action Programme
Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea 2003
Four protocols are being pursued: Biodiversity; Land-based Sources of Pollution; EIA and Emergency Response

North-East Atlantic

OSPAR Convention adopted 1992; in force since 1998
Five Annexes: Annex I prevention and elimination of pollution from land-based sources; Annex II prevention and elimination of pollution by dumping or incineration; Annex III prevention and elimination of pollution from offshore sources; Annex IV assessment of the quality of the marine environment; Annex V protection and conservation of the ecosystems and biological diversity of the maritime area. Annexes I-IV have been in force since 1998, and Annex V since 2000

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North-East Atlantic

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Fax: +(81-76)-444-2780
Busan office
408-1, Shirang-Ri, Gijang-Up, Gijang-Gun, Busan
619-902 Republic of Korea
Tel. (82-51)-720-3000
Fax: +(82-51)-720-3009

Pacific

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
P.O. Box 240, Apia, Samoa
Tel: +685 21929
Fax: +685 20 231
Web: <http://www.sprep.org>

Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA)
P.O. Box 53662, Jeddah 21583, Saudi Arabia
Tel: +966 2 657 3224
Fax: +966 2 652 1901

ROPME Sea Area

Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME)
P.O. Box 26388 Safat 13124, State of Kuwait
Tel: +965 531 2140/3
Fax: +965 533 5243
Web: <http://www.ropme.com>

South Asian Seas

South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)
10 Anderson Road
Colombo 5, Sri Lanka
Tel: ++94 11 2 596 442
Fax: +94 11 2 589 369

South-East Pacific

Secretaria Ejecutiva del Plan de Acción del Pacífico Sudeste
Av. Carlos Julio Arosemena Km. 3.5 via a Daule
Guayaquil-Ecuador
Tel: +5934 2221200/221202
Fax: +5934 2221201

West & Central Africa

Regional Coordination Unit for the West and Central Africa Action Plan (WACAF/RCU)
Ministry of Environment and Forests
20 BP 650, Abidjan 20, Cote d'Ivoire
Tel: +20 21 1183/0623
Fax: +20 22 2050
UNEP Regional Seas
(Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions)
P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi 00100, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 622 025
Fax: +254 20 624 300

Wider Caribbean

Regional Coordinating Unit for the Caribbean Environment Programme (CAR/RCU)
14-20 Port Royal Street
Kingston, Jamaica
Tel: +1 876 922 9267/8/9
Fax: +1 876 922 9292
Web: <http://www.cep.unep.org>

Partner Contacts

GPA – Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

GPA Coordination Office, UNEP
P.O. Box 16227
2500 BE, The Hague, The Netherlands
Tel: +3170 311 4462
Fax: +3170 311 4485
Web: www.gpa.unep.org

CBD – Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

393 St., Jacques Street, Office 300
Montreal, Quebec Canada H2Y 1N9
Tel: +1 514 288 2220. Direct line: 1 514 287 7002
Fax: +1 514 288 6588 or 1 514 288 0917
Web: www.biodiv.org

CITES – Secretariat to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora (CITES)

15 chemin des Anémones, Case postale 456,
CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 917 8139/40
Fax: +41 22 797 3417
Web: www.cites.org

CMS – Secretariat to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

UNEP/CMS Secretariat
United Premises in Bonn
Martin-Luther-King Str. 8, D-53177 Bonn, Germany
Tel: +49 228 515 2401/2
Fax: +49 228 815 2449
Web: www.cms.int

RAMSAR Convention Secretariat

The Ramsar Convention Bureau
Rue Mauverney 28,
CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 999 0170
Fax: +41 22 999 0169
Web: www.ramsar.org

PIC – Secretariat for the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent

Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade
11-13 Chemin Des Anémones
CH-1219 Châtelaine
Geneva 10, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 917 8111
Fax: +41 22 797 3460
Web: www.pic.int

SBC – Secretariat of the Basel Convention

13-15 Chemin des Anémones, CH-1219 Châtelaine
Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 917 8218
Fax: +41 22 797 3454
Web: www.basel.int

OZONE Secretariat

United Nations Environment Programme
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi 0010
Kenya
Tel: +254 20 623 851/623 834
Fax: +254 20 624 691/92/93
Web: www.unep.org/ozone/

UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat

P.O. Box 260124 D-53153, Bonn
Germany
Tel: +49 228 815 1502
Fax: +49 228 815 1999
Web: www.unfccc.int

UNCCD – United Nations Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification

P.O Box 260129 D-53153, Bonn, Germany
Tel: +49 228 815 1502
Fax: +49 228 815 1999
Web: www.unccd.int

WHC – World Heritage Centre, UNESCO

7, Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP
France
Tel: +33 1 45 68 1572
Fax: +33 1 45 68 5570
Web: www.unesco.org

ASCOBANS SECRETARIAT – Agreement on the Conservation of Small, Cetaceans of the Baltic & North Seas.

United Nations Premises
Martin-Luther-King, Str. 8
53175 Bonn, Germany
Tel: +49 228 815 2416
Fax: +49 228 815 2440
Web: www.ascobans.org

ACCOBAMS – Agreement of the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contagious Atlantic Area

Interim Secretariat
MC 98000 MONACO
Tel: +377 931 58010/20 78
Fax: +377 920 54208
Web: www.accobams.org

DOALOS – Division of Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea (DOALOS)

Office of Legal Affairs, DC2-0450
United Nations Secretariat, New York, New York 10014, USA
Tel: +212 963 3962
Fax: +212 963 2811
Web: www.un.org/Depts/los/doalos_activities/about_doalos.htm

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Via delle Terme di Carcalla, 001 00 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 570 52847
Fax: +39 06 570 56500
Web: www.fao.org

IOC – Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15
France
Tel: +33 1 45 68 39 84
Fax: +33 1 45 68 58 10/2
Web: <http://ioc.unesco.org>

IMO – International Maritime Organization

Marine Environment Division
4 Albert Embankment
London, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 207 587 3142
Fax: +44 207 587 3210
Web: www.imo.org
Web: www.ascobans.org

WMO – World Meteorological Organization

Ocean Affairs Division (OCA)
World Weather Watch Department (WWW)
Room 7L445, 7 bis Avenue de la Paix
CP-2300
1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 730 8111
Fax: +41 22 730 8181
Web: www.wmo.int

IAEA – International Atomic Energy Agency

Marine Environment Laboratory (MEL)
4 Quai Antoine 1 er
B.P. No. 800 MC-98012
Principality of Monaco
Tel: +377 97 97 7279
Fax: +377 97 97 7275
Web: <http://www.iaea.org>

WCMC – World Conservation Monitoring Centre

219 Huntington Road
Cambridge CB3 0DL
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 0 1223 277314
Fax: +44 0 1223 277136
Web: www.wcmc.org.uk

www.unep.org

United Nations Environment Programme
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Regional Seas



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