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Regional Seas Strategic Directions for 2004-2007

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A Global Initiative to strengthen Regional Seas Conventions and Action plans and enhance co-operation



Regional Seas Strategic Directions for 2004-2007

The strategic directions, listed below, aim at strengthening the Regional Seas Programme (RSP) 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 Programmes. They provide an opportunity to improve efficiency, individually and collectively, in the RSPs, increase cooperation, and incorporate new elements in future programmes of work.

The Regional Seas Programme (RSP), an alliance between the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAP), has since its inception 30 years ago constituted a unique approach to the protection of the coastal and marine environment. The Regional Seas programmes of work are mandated by the Governing Bodies of the RSCAP. The Regional Seas have a long history of challenges, successes and lessons learnt, that can be beneficial in optimising the potential and prospects of both individual RSCAP 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 RSP must meet, but at the same time provide opportunities for strengthening the programme as a whole.

Recognising this, the UNEP Governing Council requested in its Resolution 22/2 III A the development and strengthening of RSCAP in promoting the conservation and sustainable use of the marine and coastal environment and requested UNEP to encourage and support RSCAP 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 in UNEP GC Decision 22/2 III A, 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.

This document sets out the Strategic Directions for the RSP, as agreed by the representatives of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans Secretariats, at their 5th Global Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya 26-28 November 2003 and 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, Turkey, 30th November-2nd 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 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 & marine environment, its resources, and possible threats to them, through amongst others, contributing to appropriate national and regional monitoring and assessment activities.
5. Increase the use of Regional Seas as a platform for developing common regional objectives, promoting synergies and co-ordinated 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.

* As discussed by the representatives of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans Secretariats at the 5th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas in Nairobi, Kenya, 26-28 November 2003 and further endorsed by the chairpersons, or their representatives of the COPs and IGMs at the 6th Global RS meeting, Istanbul, Turkey, 30th November-2nd December 2004.