

United Nations Environment Programme
5th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans

Nairobi, Kenya, 26-28 November 2003

REPORT OF THE MEETING

The Fifth Global Meeting of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) was held at the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON), Kenya from 26th to 28th November 2003, at the invitation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Meeting Attendance

The Meeting was attended by Co-ordinators/Representatives from the following regions: Wider Caribbean; Mediterranean; East Africa; West and Central Africa; South East Pacific; Baltic; South Asia; South Pacific; North East Pacific; Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. There were also representatives from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the International Atomic Energy Agency-Marine Environment Laboratory (IAEA-MEL), UNEP Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNEP Division of Regional Co-operation (DRC), UNEP Regional Seas, UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) and UNON Budget and Financial Management Service (BFMS).

The representatives of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment – Kuwait Region (ROPME) and the Regional Organization of the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) could not attend the meeting. UNEP met with the ROPME and PERSGA secretariats after the meeting, and the outcome of the meeting was subsequently amended to reflect the comments received.

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday 26th November 2003 by Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP. He welcomed the participants and noted that 140 nations participated in the Regional Seas Programmes, out of 191 states of the United Nations. He recalled the discussions regarding the re-vitalising of the Regional Seas Programmes during the Third Global Meeting of the Regional Seas in Monaco, and noted the progress made since then. He also expressed his appreciation to the proposed Global Regional Seas Strategy, stating that the Regional Seas could serve as a vital and vibrant instrument for international environmental policy setting. He stressed three points of the proposed Global Regional Seas Strategy: the need to increase the visibility and impact of the Regional Seas at the regional and global levels; the need to ensure the sustainability of the Regional Seas and increase countries' ownership for the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans; and the need to transform the UNEP Regional Seas Co-ordination Unit into a Service and Information Centre. He further highlighted UNEP's "Environment for Development" approach, emphasizing that environment is vital for development and the important role the Regional Seas could play in furthering this approach.

Discussion on the Proposed Regional Seas Strategy

2. Dr. Veerle Vandeweerd reviewed the main agenda items, including: the Proposed Regional Seas Strategy; Regional Seas input to the UNEP 8th Special Session of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF), 29th-31st March 2004, Jeju, South Korea; input to the UN-12th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), 19th-30th April 2004, New York, USA, and input to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) – Barbados +10 Conference in Mauritius, September 2004. She suggested that the meeting would also address coordinated Regional Seas input to the EU Marine Strategy, the EU Water Initiative, Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) programme, and the EU Water Framework Directive.

3. After the introduction by the secretariat of the proposed global Regional Seas strategy, a ‘tour de table’ took place where participants gave their preliminary views. A drafting group was formed to amend the document based on comments made.

4. The next day, the meeting carefully examined the document prepared by the drafting group and decided to form two working groups; one to work on a preamble to the document and the other on the tasks and responsibilities of the Regional Seas Office in Nairobi as a service and information centre. The meeting also reviewed the actions proposed for the secretariats and the Regional Seas Office in Nairobi. The outcomes and conclusions of the meeting discussions on “Regional Seas Strategic Directions for 2004-2007” are attached to this report.

5. It was further agreed to call a meeting of the Chairs of the Bureau’s of the COP/Governing bodies to discuss the global RS strategy and to increase ownership for the new strategic direction of the RS programme at the global level. RS secretariats will communicate to UNEP proposals for the time and venue for such a meeting. Tentatively a goal was proposed to hold this meeting in early March 2004, and that the meeting with the chairs of the bureau’s and the secretariat will take two days, one for information sharing and one to facilitate ownership and commitment towards the new strategy.

6. During the discussion on the interlinkages between Regional Seas and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Mr. Vladimir Mamaev of the UNEP/DGEF emphasised the strong ties between the Regional Seas and the International Waters portfolio of GEF. He noted that most International Waters projects are conducted under Regional Seas auspices and promised GEF’s continuous support to the RS. In the discussion that followed it was proposed that a joint publication for the UNEP/GEF and the Regional Seas Programme be developed and presented at the next GEF council and relevant International Waters and Regional Seas meetings. The meeting also expressed its satisfaction of the co-operation between the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans and the GEF.

7. Mr. Stephen de Mora from the IAEA-MEL gave a presentation on ‘Review of ongoing monitoring and assessment in the UNEP Regional Seas Programmes’. The presentation was welcomed and it was proposed that MEL includes in the review the other non-UNEP administered Regional Seas Programmes. The meeting agreed that there is a need to develop financial strategies to ensure long term monitoring and assessment programmes, particularly at the national level.

Mr. Lucien Chabason of MAP, summarised the discussion, highlighting: i) the need to strengthen and build national capacity for monitoring and assessment programmes; ii) a pre-requisite for the management of marine and coastal environments of the regions is to have a comprehensive and effective monitoring and assessment programme in place, which takes several years to establish, iii) the contribution of MESL Laboratory in Monaco to regions (including MAP) to establish and develop monitoring systems; and iv) the major duty of building, financing, operating and maintaining monitoring systems rests with national authorities.

8. A presentation on the Regional Seas website under construction was made by Ms. Danielle Smith, an intern with the UNEP Regional Seas Unit in Nairobi. The development of the website was welcomed. The comments made will be taken into account in the further development of the Regional Seas Website.

9. The meeting also noted UNEP's efforts to provide status reports on regional programmes of relevance to the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, giving an overview of the major actors, partners and ongoing projects in the regions. This exercise had been carried out in the UNEP administered Regional Seas Programmes and will be extended to other regions. It will be an ongoing exercise.

Other Agenda Items

10. A side meeting on the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was attended by the Co-ordinators from five SIDS-regions: Caribbean, South Pacific, East Africa, West Africa and South Asia. Ms. Hanneke Van Lavieren gave a presentation on the preparatory process for the Barbados +10 Conference in Mauritius in 2004, the outcome of the three regional preparatory meetings, and UNEP's activities towards Barbados +10. She also presented some suggestions for possible contributions by the Regional Seas Programmes to Barbados +10. An exchange of views and short discussions followed, including on how the SIDS-Regional Seas could advance the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and Type II initiatives related to the marine environment. The participants stressed that better exchange of information and collaboration between the regions on SIDS activities was needed. The report of the side meeting on SIDS is added as an annex to this report.

11. Mr. Rolph Payet, co-chair of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), briefed the meeting on the outcome of the ICRI coordination and planning committee meeting that took place the preceding week in the Turks and Caicos. He highlighted the adoption of more formal operating procedures, a resolution on coral reefs in Small Island Developing States, and a decision on the cold water coral reefs. He emphasised the desire of ICRI to continue to work closely within the Regional Seas Programmes and was pleased to note the participation of most of the Regional Seas with significant coral reefs at the ICRI meeting.

12. Ms. Vandeweerd informed the meeting of UNEP's effort to facilitate a coherent contribution of Regional Seas bordering the EU to the EU Marine Strategy, the EU Water Initiative, ICZM, and the EU Water Framework Directive. UNEP has designated focal points to three working groups formed for the development of the Marine Strategy i.e. the ecosystem, monitoring and assessment, and hazardous

substances working groups. The participants stressed the need to assess to what extent the EU contributes to the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. The role of the Regional Seas was to participate and influence the development of the European Marine Strategy, to ensure concerted actions on all levels globally, regionally and nationally, and to ensure that the final EU strategy will complement and work to achieve the Regional Seas' objectives. Ms. Vandeweerd proposed that a meeting between the EU and relevant RS programmes would be organised, amongst others to provide inputs to the working groups of the European Marine Strategy and to develop common positions.

13. Ms. Vandeweerd briefed the meeting on item 6 of the provisional agenda for the 8th Special Session of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) in Jeju, South Korea, 29th-31st March 2004, focusing on 'Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements'. The need to identify success stories in Regional Seas illustrating sustainable wastewater treatment was stressed. The possible contributions of Regional Seas to the GMEF, including through the conventions, the LBA protocols, the SAP, the identification of hotspots, and projects on sanitation and wastewater treatment were discussed. The respective Regional Seas Secretariats will bring the issue to the attention of their Ministers of Environment, to ensure that Regional Seas experiences are adequately reflected during the GMEF.

14. The Ms. Annie Muchai briefed the meeting was also briefed on a GPA questionnaire to assess availability of information on domestic wastewater treatment, and the feasibility of defining regional Wastewater Emission Targets (WET). The aim is to provide information on the environmental aspects of water and sanitation to the GMEF and the preparatory process for the CSD-12, and to explore the possible use of global, regional and/or national WET. The need to address the financing of domestic wastewater collection and treatment was also discussed.

15. The meeting raised concern on the title of the Regional Seas Office in Nairobi as 'Regional Seas Unit', and expressed its wish that the name should reflect the nature of its responsibilities towards the Programme and the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans. 'Regional Seas Co-ordinating Office' seemed to be an acceptable option.

Next Meeting

16. The meeting gratefully accepted the offer of Mr. Plamen Dzhadzhev, the Executive Director of the Black Sea Environment Programme to host the next Global Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey. The proposed dates of the next meeting are November/December 2004.

Closing of Meeting

17. Mr. Svein Tveitdal the Director, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation and the Division of Environment Conventions, thanked the participants for their deliberations. He expressed UNEP's commitment and support to the Regional Seas Programmes.

18. Ms. Veerle Vandeweerd closed the meeting by thanking the participants for their valuable contribution, and the Secretariat for its work in preparation and organisation of the meeting.

Annex I

UNEP's Regional Seas Coordinating Office as a Support Center for the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans

The Regional Seas Co-ordinating Office at UNEP's headquarters in Nairobi will serve as a support, liaison and information centre for the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAP) and will fulfil, among others, the following tasks:

Liaison and co-operation on the international level

- Develop common RS positions to major international meetings, programmes and initiatives as they relate to coasts, oceans and islands.
- Represent, as appropriate, RSCAP in relevant international fora and present the common RS position.
- Strengthen links, co-operation and co-ordination with international organisations such as IMO, UNESCO-IOC, IAEA and FAO, and liaise between these and RSCAPs;
- Strengthen co-operation, co-ordination and synergies between RSCAP and MEAs, such as CBD and the Basel Convention, GEF International Waters projects and other relevant global and regional programmes and initiatives;

Increase RSCAP visibility and impact through the development of appropriate information and outreach systems. This may include a web-based information and communication centre, including a 'bulletin board' and calendar of events, the establishment and maintenance of databases and web-based rosters of experts and consultants, utilising synergies with GEF IW-LEARN.

Support to and co-operation with Regional Seas Programmes

- Strengthen and facilitate co-operation and synergies among RSCAPs and initiatives within and outside the United Nations system, as appropriate;
- Strengthen horizontal co-operation and foster twinning arrangements between RSCAPs;
- Promote and facilitate the development of a coherent framework for evaluation/assessment of the RSCAPs;
- Strengthen the capability of RSCAPs to achieve financial sustainability through assistance in project development and liaison with donors and partners;
- Provide legal support to countries and RSPs in translating the RS conventions and action plans into national legislation, follow-up on and implement developments in international environmental law as applicable;
- Provide high-level political support to RSCAPs in enhancing their visibility and sustainability through UNEP's senior management;
- Provide programmatic support and assist in capacity building as appropriate.

Liaison within UNEP

Liaise between RSCAPs and the GPA, UNEP/GEF and other relevant UNEP divisions, such as DRC, DTIE and DEWA; and ensure effective co-operation between relevant UNEP programmes (law, finance, technology, assessment etc.) and RSCAPs;

- Assisting RS secretariats in their dealings with UNON.

Annex II

SIDS side meeting during the 5th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas
Nairobi, 26-28 November 2003

Present:

Ms. I'o A. Tuakeu-Lindsay – SPREP
Mr. Rolph Payet – EAF RCU
Mr. Nelson Andrade-Colmenares - CAR
Mme. Nassere Kaba – WACAF –RCU- Abijan Convention
Mr. Prasantha Dias - SAS

UNEP gave a short presentation on:

- Preparatory process to Barbados + 10 and planned important events next year.
- Outcome regional preparatory meetings
- UNEP's activities towards Barbados + 10
- Suggested contributions from Regional Seas

Discussions

SPREP – South Pacific

Informed us of the Pacific Islands Ocean Forum Policy that has been developed for the region and will be presented to the planned Ocean Forum Meeting in February 2004. Suggests UNEP should become familiar with this policy and propose possible cooperation/ contribution.

14 countries are preparing their national assessment reports and these are being converted into one regional position document for Barbados +10.

Mentioned that there are several success stories of sustainable development activities (in cooperation with Commonwealth) in the region and suggests these to be used at appropriate venues (e.g. side event in Jeju)

Will send more info after consultation with people at SPREP.

Mentioned the 1999- GEO and the current Pacific GEO update that is being prepared with UNEP/DEWA – this is also an example of a successful and useful activity to be promoted

Wider Caribbean

Mentioned that Luc St Pierre was more involved in the SIDS issues and would provide specific inputs according to the points that UNEP suggested.

Mentioned that there are some success stories in the region for example within ICRAN project and on marine protected areas which could be used at special events. Also the GEF waste water project, the activities under the SPAW protocol and the protocol on LBA, and the GPA and its assistance in preparing the NPAs

Suggested that CAR and SPREP work together on issuing a common message to B+10 on “Sustainable Tourism” specifically related to Coral Reefs and Protected areas

Some issues he feels should be focused on as well:

Activities of MEAS under the umbrella of UNEP (Basel convention) – the role of global conventions in SIDS

POPs assistance on pesticides in SIDS

CITES, CMS activities in SIDS

Mentioned that there are too many priorities under the BPOA and that these should now be prioritised.

There should be an integrated approach to SIDS within the UN System and this should include the MEAS – this would show what UN is actually doing in the field of environment.

Suggested that there should be 2 levels of intervention in SIDS within UNEP:

1. The Regional Seas role in SIDS under the UNEP umbrella
2. The global (UNEP MEAs) level

Suggested that we prepare not only a matrix on UNEP's activities but on all UN agencies and MEAs related to environment to get a better overview of what is done in SIDS.

East Africa

There has always been bias towards SPREP and CAR SIDS – the AIMS SIDS need more attention and UNEP should start with this through the Regional Seas Programmes.

AIMS SIDS need special assistance towards the Barbados+10 meeting

Emerging issue to add to the BPOA:

- Trade and environment – also the live coral and fish, aquarium trade specifically related to the marine environment in all SIDS regions.

How can the RS in SIDS regions engage in type II initiatives, currently there is a lack of presence, in the AIMS region?

For example the Energy sector and SIDS – type II initiative suggested.

Nice case studies should be shared amongst the SIDS.

How can we improve and expand sustainable tourism in AIMS region?

West and Central Africa

Would like to forward the suggested discussion points to relevant people in her region and come back to UNEP in more detail.

Mentions that UNEP has been less active in her region with regards to SIDS.

Suggest to have better cooperation – exchange of info and communication with the more active SIDS regions.

Wants to hear about best practices and success stories

South Asian Seas

UNEP has not been very active in the Maldives and a better involvement and more activities would be good through the RS programme.

GloBallast issue through RS programme – involve Maldives. (Maldives is in the AIMS region)

Introduce ICran in the region- Maldives involvement.