UNITED
NATIONS

United Nations
Environment
Programme

UNEP

Distr.
LIMITED

UNEP/WBRS.1/7
25 June 1998

Original: ENGLISH

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Programme Consultation,
The Hague, The Netherlands,
24-26 June 1998.

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Introduction

In 1996, the Oceans and Coastal Areas Programme Activity Centre (OCA/PAC) and the Freshwater Unit of UNEP merged to become the Water Branch. This merger was a critical move in the realization of the need for a holistic and comprehensive approach to achieve sustainable development within a watershed area. As a result of this merger, the two sub-programmes brought four critical programmes together, namely, the Environmentally Sound Management of Inland Water (EMINWA), the Global Environment Monitoring System/Water (GEMS/Water), the Integrated Coastal Areas Management (ICAM) programme within the framework of the Regional Seas, and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). In view of this it was necessary to consider this in line with the implementation of the Regional Seas Programme. Consequently the First Inter-regional Seas Programme Consultation was convened by UNEP at the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office, The Hague, The Netherlands, 24-26 June 1998.

The main purpose of the Consultation was:

a) to allow all secretariats and coordinating units for regional seas programmes to present the status of the implementation of their conventions and action plans;

b) to discuss and define common problems and areas of interest for cooperation;

c) to discuss the evolution and future of the regional seas programmes; and

d) to discuss possible coordinated contributions to the discussions to take place at the Seventh Session of the Commission for Sustainable Development in 1999.

The conclusions of the Consultation are to be used by UNEP as guidance in developing a comprehensive support programme for the Regional Seas.

In taking advantage of the just concluded Informal Meeting of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, 22-24 June 1998, The Hague, the participants were invited to attend the Regional Seas Consultation in order that the ACC members could be briefed on the status of implementation of the Regional Seas Programme, Conventions and Action Plans.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Consultation

Ms Terttu Melvasalo, Director of the Water Branch of UNEP, opened the Consultation on 24 June 1998 at 2.00 p.m. and welcomed the participants on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP. The list of participants is attached as Annex I. The Chair thanked the ACC Subcommittee members for being able to attend as it provided a unique opportunity for discussion and the exchange of information with the Regional Seas Programme Coordinators.

The Chair then invited Mr. Jorge Illueca, Assistant Executive Director, Programme of UNEP, to address the meeting. Mr. Illueca raised a number of issues concerning UNEP's views and the needs for action with regard to the Coordination of UNEP administered global and regional conventions. He informed the meeting of the forthcoming meeting of UNEP Convention Secretariats to be held on the 3rd July 1998, in Geneva. The Regional Seas Coordinators of the Mediterranean Action Plan and Caribbean Environment Programme have been invited. The meeting is to address three main issues which are paramount to the successful implementation and coordination of Conventions as a whole, these being:

a) the issue of Trade and Environment, as it is a common issue (a common denominator) spanning most conventions notably the Basel, CITES and Montreal Protocol, and will also be an important issue within the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Conventions which are in the process of being negotiated, as well as within the Regional Seas Conventions;

b) institutional Coherence - the need to arrive at commonly shared definitions; and

c) the need to develop synergy among programmes.

He further emphasize the need to assess the legal compatibility, institutional coherence and economic impact of these numerous Conventions, so as to ascertain their effectiveness. Other issues of noticeable importance was the need to identify common terminology and basic environmental principles that link the UNEP administered conventions, as well as the need for the development of a conflict resolution mechanism for all.

In this regard, UNEP will create a division to ensure proper coordination of the UNEP administered conventions.

The Chair provided the floor with an opportunity to address the meeting. Issues raised related to the role and mechanism in which the Regional Seas Programme could implement global conventions, the role of Non-governmental organizations and the impact of trade liberalization on the environment. The latter requiring the need for the preparation of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) as a tool for sustainable development. In this regard it was suggested that a methodology be developed for the preparation of SEA's. Furthermore, Mr. Illueca confirmed that the Regional Sea Programme should take the lead in regard to specific issues within specific Conventions and as such, should be considered a major partner in implementing global conventions.

Agenda Item 2: Organization of the consultation and adoption of the agenda

Ms Terttu Melvasalo, Director, Water Branch chaired the Consultation. The Chair proposed arrangements suitable for the organization of the work of the Consultation. The working hours for the Consultation were agreed as follows: 09:00-12:30, 14:00-17:00. The Consultation adopted its Provisional Agenda (Annex II), beginning with Agenda item 4. The list of documents available to the Consultation is attached as Annex III.

Agenda item 3. Report of the Water Branch Ocean and Coastal Areas Programme

Mr. Paul Akiwumi presented the report of the Water Branch Oceans and Coastal Areas Programme as presented in Annex IV, to the Consultation, which entailed the focus of UNEP and possible areas of cooperation. The Secretariat informed the participants that the Regional Seas Programme remained the center piece of the Ocean Programme. Furthermore, the secretariat drew attention to specific areas where UNEP could provide support, namely:

a) facilitation of the Inter-regional cooperation;

b) synergies among work programmes (programme/exercise);

c) joint programmes to develop guidelines/tools etc.;

d) capacity building programmes; and

e) Inter-regional transfer of technology.

Ms. Maria Simonelli informed the Consultation on the environmental frameworks for offshore oil and gas industry (UNEP-IE)

Environmental Frameworks for industrial operations have evolved rapidly in recent years and now include a variety of new mechanisms to influence environmental performance.

To assist countries, information about regulatory frameworks worldwide is being gathered by UNEP-IE to demonstrate the variety of mechanisms in use. These include regulatory, co-regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms, and specifically include legislation, regulatory standards, management instruments (e.g. EIA) negotiated agreements, codes of practice, consultative forums, economic instruments.

The information is being gathered by a submission form and participants are requested to circulate this to environment and industry departments and industry associations, and contact UNEP, with who this has been circulated to, for follow up. The information, in form of nationals profiles will be compiled and can be served by visiting "Offshore Oil and Gas Environment Forum" website. The Regional Seas Coordinators can take advantage of this and make use of forum facilities.

Specifically, most Regional Seas Programmes have a convention reference to combating marine pollution and some make special reference to hydrocarbons. Thus anything that can be done to assist governments in working effectively with industry can only strengthen convention outcomes. To this end Regional Coordinators were requested to distribute the Environmental Frameworks for the Offshore Oil and Gas Industry submission form for websites to their respective countries to complete. (UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.6)

John McManus informed the consultation of a variety of global activities that have been initiated to determine the status of coral reefs and to identify priorities for actions necessary to reduce coral reef degradation. The global workshop of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) in 1995 developed a Framework for Action, which was subsequently endorsed by acclamation by representatives of 80 governments and a variety of international, regional and national agencies. Regional priorities have been established in ICRI in workshops held in six regions, organized through the UNEP Regional Seas Programme. The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) has been established, with Regional Seas Programmes serving to host its regional nodes. ReefBase, a global database on coral reefs and their resources, serves as the official database of the GCRMN, and provides summaries of existing information on 8,000 of the world's coral reefs. A ReefBase Aquanaut System has been developed to train non-scientists, including marine park rangers, volunteers, NGO's and others, to effectively monitor coral reefs. A related program, Reef Check, has organized volunteers to conduct simple surveys in hundreds of reefs globally. The World Resources Institute, ICLARM and The World Conservation Monitoring Centre have jointly produced a "Reefs at Risk" report, identifying areas of reef degradation. Data from ReefBase and other sources have also led to a major report indicating that coral reefs may be deleteriously affectedly by global warming.

These activities have set the stage for effective, globally coordinated action to United Nations Foundation (UNF) and United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNEIP) constitute a potential source of support for this activity. With the encouragement of the UNF, a proposal is being developed to involve UNEP, ICLARM, the ICRI, GCRMN and others in a coordinated umbrella project for coral reef conservation and management. (UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.8). The overall objective of the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICAN) will be to reverse coral reef degradation globally.

It was concluded that the Regional Seas Programmes, notably SACEP, EAF, CEP, SPREP and EAS would be the implementing arm of the ICAN programme. To this end they would make available all information concerning their programme to ICLARM before the 4th July 1998.

The consultation was informed of a GEF-proposal being prepared by UNDP and with UNEP and the World Bank as co-implementing agencies, entitled International Waters Distance Learning and Training Project, Phase 1, the general objective is "to improve GEF's system-wide capacity, through knowledge sharing, to address its priority concerns of land-based sources of pollution".

i) share best practices, and collaborate across the Internet using a wide array of new tools and learning methods,

ii) develop training courses tailored to the strategic need of GEF; and

iii) hold face-to-face biennial meetings among GEF agencies, project and partner personnel. In view of the potential use/involvement of the GPA Coordination Office and the Regional Seas Programme as regards to the development of clearing-houses, the draft project document as well as some preliminary comments provided by UNEP, were distributed to the participants. The participants were asked to provide any comments directly to the Secretariat of the consultation.

Agenda item 4. Summary presentations by Regional Secretariats/Regional Coordinating Units on the implementation of the Conventions and Action Plans

The Secretariat/Regional Coordinating Units presented their reports on the status of the implementation of their Conventions and Action Plans; ratification/ accessions; national compliance, ongoing and planned programme/activities, as presented in Annex V to this report.

Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP)

Mr. Nelson Andrade Colmenares, Coordinator of CEP presented the Cartaoçna Convention and its protocols.

He emphasized that the Convention was the only comprehensive environmental treaty for the region. In relationship with the implementation of global conventions, he pointed out that the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) is directly linked with the Global Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as well as with the CITES Convention. Furthermore, there is a relationship between the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution Programme (AMEP) and the Global Programme of Action (GPA).

A brief description of the composition of CEP was given, highlighting the latest developments in each sub-programme.

A description of the institutional developments with donors, UN Agencies and other international organizations was also given. He mentioned in particular the management with IMO / REMPETIC, as well as coordination with IOC, UNDP, ECLAC and within UNEP, with GRID, Infoterra, ROLAC, Industry and Environment, PAC Paris and IETC/Japan.

In his closing remarks, he recognized the need for this type of coordinating meeting.

Action Plan and Convention for the West and Central African Region (WACAF)

Ms. Nassére Kaba, Interim Coordinator for the WACAF Region informed the meeting of the history and development of the Region's Action Plan and Convention.

Adopted together with an Action Plan in March 1981, the Convention and its Protocol have been ratified by only 10 countries out of the 21 in the region. During the period 1981-1990, the WACAF Action Plan tackled the main issues facing the region in cooperation with UNEP (as the Secretariat of the Convention and Action Plan), FAO, IOC, WHO, IAEA, IMO, UNIDO and IUCN. These issues being: marine and coastal pollution, coastal erosion, protection and conservation of marine areas and fauna, sea-level rise and integrated coastal area management.

In the line with the priority issues identified and adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Convention, new programmes on ICAM and land-based sources of pollution are being developed. Furthermore, her appointment as interim Coordinator to undertake some activities and promote the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) as a technical cooperative firm, has been important in building confidence among the Countries of the region in the programme.

She concluded by emphasizing that the continued support of UNEP/Water Branch is needed to help with the establishment of the WACAF/RCU in Abidjan.

Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME)

Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Awadi, Secretary General of ROPME informed the meeting of the special circumstances that prevail in his region. The States surrounding the sea are the major oil producing countries in the world. The challenge that faces the region being the development of their oil industry and protection of the marine environment, noting that approximately 20 million barrels of oil and oil product passes through the region.

To face this challenge, the countries of the region decided to form ROPME with a major task of allowing development to continue and at the same time protecting the marine environment.

The Kuwait Convention was subsequently signed and ratified by eight members of the region, on 1st January 1982; Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Oman.

The Kuwait Action Plan was adopted to implement many ambitious programmes towards the protection of the marine environment of the region.

The Secretariat was established in Kuwait and a very extensive and ambitious programme was launched. This has yielded a great deal of enthusiasm and has propelled the environment in the petro-chemical industries agendas.

To facilitate the implementation of the Convention four Protocols were signed, namely: the

a) Protocol concerning Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, 1978.

b) Protocol concerning Marine Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf, 1989.

c) Protocol concerning Protection of the Marine Environment Against Pollution from Land-based Sources, 1990.

d) Protocol on the Movements and Disposal of Hazardous Wastes and other Wastes, 1998.

Another protocol on Biological Diversity and Establishment of Specially Protected Areas, is under preparation.

He further stressed the need for better coordination and stronger links to be established between the Regional Seas Programmes, emphasizing that ROPME was ready to respond to any initiatives that would maximize efforts in protecting the marine environment.

Eastern African Action Plan Regional Activity Centre (EAF/RCU)

Mr. Richard Congar, the Interim Coordinator of the EAF/RCU informed the meeting that the Convention entered into force in May 1996.

Furthermore, the first meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention, held in Seychelles in March 1997 made a series of decisions and recommendations regarding institutional and financial matters, as well as priority activities to be implemented in 1997-1998 and within the next decade.

As at 17 March 1997, Contracting Parties to the Convention are: Comoros, France (La Réunion), Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania. Since that day, Mozambique, Madagascar have ratified the Convention and protocols; South Africa, the European Union, and Indian Ocean Commission, have expressed interest to ratify the Convention.

The Regional Coordinating Unit was established in the Seychelles in February 1997, and formally opened by the Executive Director of UNEP in August 1997.

The first meeting of Contracting Parties approved the four following components of the 1997-1998 work-programme: Operation of the Coordinating Unit; Capacity Building in integrated coastal area

management; Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities; and Protection of Marine Biodiversity.

In accordance with the above mentioned work-programme, EAF/RCU is coordinating the following projects: EAF/5: protection and management of marine and coastal areas; EAF/6: monitoring and control of sources, level and effects of pollutants; EAF/14: preparation of the Eastern African Coastal Resources Database and Atlas. In addition, regional components of global/international initiatives or programmes are implemented in co-operation with, or by the Coordinating Unit: Global Programme of Action (GPA/EAF); ICRI; SIDS; GEF/Western Indian Ocean project, for the preparation of transboundary diagnostic analysis and strategic action programme; other regional projects contributing to the implementation of the Convention focus on the protection of biodiversity (GEF/IUCN), and the implementation of OPRC Convention (GEF/World Bank-Commission de l'Océan indien, COI).

In addition, a cooperative agreement between the Regional Environment Programme of COI (COI/PRE), the Secretariat for Eastern African Coastal Area Management (SEACAM) and the Regional Coordinating Unit (EAF/RCU) has already been submitted to UNEP for signature.

He emphasized that in order to strengthen cooperation in Eastern Africa, there was a need to promote the Convention and Action Plan, and secure yearly contributions of the Eastern African Countries.

South East Pacific Action Plan (CPPS)

Dr. Ulises Manaylla Alarcon, advisor of the Plan of Action of the South East Pacific, made a presentation of CPPS, which comprised of the following:

The Plan of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the South East Pacific was approved in 1981 by Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Panama with the main aim of protecting the marine environment and coastal areas to safeguard the health and well being of present and future generations. The general legal framework of the Plan of Action of the South East Pacific is the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zones of the South East Pacific "Lima Convention" signed in 1981.

He informed delegates about the activities under the Plan of Action, grouped in the following areas;

a) Coordinated Regional Programme for the Research, Surveillance and Causes of Marine Pollution of the South East Pacific, known as CONPACSE

b) Integrated Coastal Zone Management

c) Environmental Support Assessment

d) Protected Marine and Coastal Areas

e) Conservation of the Marine Mammals of the South East Pacific

f) Marine and Coastal Biodiversity

g) Climate Changes

He also referred to the legal component as the most developed one within the context of the Regional Seas Programme.

He recognized the good interagency cooperation between CPPS and UNEP, and the valuable support of other United Nations agencies.

He emphasized that the Plan of Action was valuable in that it reinforced national capacity and catalyzed institutional actions to concentrate efforts on priority needs to protect the marine and coastal areas in their respective countries. He went on to present the programme of activities for the period 1998-1999, approved by the VIII Intergovernmental Meeting (November 1997).

North-West Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)

Mr. Robbert Droop from the GPA Coordination Office - The Hague introduced on behalf of Mr. Takehiro Nakamura, focal point of UNEP's Water Branch for NOWPAP, the main features of the action plan and some issues for future inter-regional cooperation.

After having been agreed at the Second Inter-governmental Meeting of Parties to NOWPAP in 1996, the action plan focuses on 5 priority projects:

a) establishment of a comprehensive database and information management system;

b) survey of national environmental legislation, objectives, strategies and policies;

c) establishment of a collaborative, regional monitoring programme;

d) development of effective measures for regional cooperation in marine pollution preparedness and response; and

e) commence the establishment of regional activity centers and their networks.

Furthermore, the following activities are planned for 1998 and 1999:

a) public awareness on the occasion of the International Year of the Ocean;

b) application of a rapid assessment of pollution into the marine environment (implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment); and

c) preparation of a programme on marine biodiversity (assessment of marine biodiversity, coordination of marine protected areas, etc.).

in order to implement NOWPAP, the following are deemed to be the areas for inter-regional cooperation and assistance:

- exchange of information on reference materials used under the various regional programmes, and comparison between international reference materials (IAEA/IOC/UNEP) and regional ones

- information exchange on the development of a regional contingency plan for emergency marine pollution, and review of such draft NOWPAP contingency plan by other regional programmes based on their experiences.

- exchange of information on existing programmes relevant to marine biodiversity in other regions.

- information on experiences with the organization and functioning of Regional Activity Centers and establish a network of RAC's working in the same field.

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP)

Mr. Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardene introduced the main elements of the SACEP programme as follows:

The Action Plan for the Protection and Management of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the South Asian Regional Seas Programme was formally adopted at a meeting of Plenipotentiaries of the concerned countries held in New Delhi, on March 24th 1995. The member countries of the South Asian Sea Programme are Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Due to the fact that there was a delay by one country in signing the Final Act, the South Seas Action Plan came into force only in January 1998. All member States have contributed to the South Asian Seas Trust

Fund and the first Meeting of Plenipotentiaries has been scheduled for October 1998. The Trust Fund is for the running of the Secretariat whilst support for programme activities will be from UN and other agencies. South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) is the Secretariat for the implementation of the Action Plan.

In addition to the general areas of concern under the standard major areas in the Action Plan, four major priority areas have been identified for programme implementation under the South Asian Seas Action Plan. The four major areas identified are (1) Integrated Coastal Zone Management; (2) Development and Implementing of National and Regional Oil Spill Contingency Planning; (3) Human Resources Development through Strengthening Regional Centers of Excellence and (4) Land-based Sources of Marine Pollution.

SACEP will be presenting to the 1st Meeting of Plenipotentiaries a plan of action as to how the Secretariat proposes to develop project profiles identified under each of the priority areas.

Despite the fact that a full fledged Secretariat was not in place, SACEP has been able to mobilize resources to develop many meaningful projects such as a Regional Training for Management Of Protected Areas & Coral Island Ecosystems in the Indian Ocean and a Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan for the South Asian Seas Region.

SACEP is also implementing the GPA for the South Asian region and is also the Focal Point for the South Asian region for Global Reef Monitoring Network and for the implementation of the International Coral Reef Initiative.

International Ocean Institute (IOI)

Mr. Gunnar Kullenberg, Executive Director of the IOI, presented a paper on the establishment of the IOI.

The IOI was created in 1971/72 and is incorporated as a non-profit making non-governmental organization in the Netherlands, with its headquarters in Malta. Initially IOI emphasized the training and awareness of the UNCLOS issues and has held many courses. In the 1990's the IOI has moved towards other issues, emphasizing an integrated approach and linkages between UNCLOS, and UNCED results. The regional perspective is seen as the most relevant base for implementation. Human needs and local participation are also emphasized.

The IOI system has long cooperated with the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, and IOI can be used to help disseminate information to reach other sectors and to provide feed-back. As an NGO it can help broaden the scope of the Regional Seas Programmes.

The IOI system could also be used to help and facilitate the implementation of the GPA-LBA. The IOI could for example contribute through:

a) dissemination of information about the GPA-LBA and what it means, the interpretation of it, at ground level, to the communities;

b) collect information on functioning of traditional or local/national culture, and alternatives on environmentally sound technologies, used for environment protection or resource protection and development;

c) initiate linkages with international and national NGO's which can help through their network in information dissemination, collection and exchange;

d) contribute to education and public awareness, including generation of an understanding at community level of what the GPA-LBA aims at and why it may be important; getting people involved in the process; by including this in the evolving and existing IOI courses;

e) possible establishment of co-management structures, involving communities, authorities at local and national level, and various organizations, so as to help generate a comprehensive management approach;

f) help establish a dialogue and an open, transparent monitoring system gathering information on effects an implications of actions; and

g) prepare and organize printing of publications and information in different languages as regards the GPA-LBA and related matters, with the help of the IOI Operational Centers.

The IOI system now consists of Headquarters, Operational centers (10) the Planning Council (15-20 persons), the Governing Board (15-20 persons), the Pacem in Maribus (PIM) conference and the Alumni network.

1992 OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic

The representative of OSPAR Mr. van de Wetering, informed the meeting on the history and programme of OSPAR.

On 25th March, the 1992 OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic entered into force. This Convention replaces and modernizes the 1972 Oslo Convention and the 1974 Paris Convention both related to the prevention of pollution of that area. Contracting Parties to the Convention are 15 Western European countries and the European Union.

It is expected that the 1998 Ministerial Meeting of the OSPAR Commission (MML 1998) will adopt a new Annex to the Convention, which will legally formalize the ability of the Commission to take measures to protect and conserve the ecosystems and biological diversity of the maritime area of the Convention.

MML 1998 will also adopt the following four comprehensive strategies, aimed at directing the work of the Commission in the medium to long term with regard to:

a) hazardous substances;

b) radioactive substances;

c) combating eutrophication;

d) protecting and conserving ecosystems and biological diversity.

Furthermore, MML 1998 will adopt a series of Decisions and Recommendations, *inter alia*, legally binding Decision with regard to:

a) the disposal of disused offshore installation; and

b) emission and discharge limit values for two specified sub-sectors of the chemical industry.

Assessment and monitoring work of the Commission is currently aimed at finalizing by the year 2000, a comprehensive Quality Status Report (QSR) of the North-East Atlantic based upon five regional QSRs.

Mr. van de Wetering also presented a document containing concrete proposals on how OSPAR could cooperate with other regional seas programmes, which was currently being discussed within the 1992 OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic framework (UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.11).

Ms. Terttu Melvasalo finally briefed the meeting on the developments of the North-East and Central American Pacific Action Plan, notably the request by the Governing Council of UNEP for the development of the programme, and the preliminary draft Convention prepared.

Pursuant to the presentations the discussions that followed highlighted a number of issues, namely in relation to the Conventions, the questions concerning national compliance, the effectiveness of the programme, the element of the need for the Conventions to address socio-economic aspects including fisheries issues, the recognition of the Regional Seas as a mechanism for implementing global Conventions as well as the need for inter-regional cooperation

Agenda item 5. Presentation by the Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Regional Seas Programme on the evolution of the Mediterranean Action Plan and Barcelona Convention

The Coordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Mr. Lucien Chabason, presented a paper on the recent evolution of the Barcelona Convention.

Since its establishment in 1975, MAP focused primarily on the protection of the Mediterranean sea against pollution (sea borne as well as land-based), the creation of specifically protected areas, and activities related to monitoring (MEDPOL).

In response to international and regional trends the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention decided to initiate the process of revising its legal instruments in 1996/97 (Annex VI).The revised Convention introduces the Rio Declaration principles and four more mechanisms for reporting and compliance.

The Coordinator discussed the positive aspects of this evolution, as well as its risks in terms of over spreading, resulting in the lack of appropriate resources both human and financial. He finally concluded by pointing out that the protection of the marine environment would receive high priority within MAP.

Agenda item 6. Identification of and discussion on fundamental problems in the implementation of the Regional Seas Programme

The Chair invited the respective Coordinators to table problems hampering the implementation of their programmes as well as support required to overcome them.

From the preceding presentations and discussions the meeting identified the following points as the most fundamental problems hampering the implementation of the respective regional seas programmes:

Institutional

- the ambiguous relationship between UNEP's Regional Offices and Regional Seas Coordinating Units.
- administration of projects, lack of response from UNON related to recruitment, payments, payroll particularly with regard to the Trust Fund management.
- the Coordinators not being able to represent their regional seas conventions at global convention meetings
- the need to evolve and become more service minded, incorporating development issues.

Co-ordination

- the lack of inter-regional cooperation/ reporting mechanisms.
- the lack of sufficient Regional Seas representation at Global Meetings and Forums.
- the lack of recognition by Global Conventions of the regional mechanism that the programmes provide for regional delivery
- the lack of necessary interaction with the fisheries sector and other socio-economic sectors
- the limited cooperation with the oil industry in relation to the implementation of the MARPOL Convention.

National Involvement

- the slow and complacent national compliance with regard to the provisions of the Conventions.
- the continuous need to convince the countries of the socio-economic benefits and implications of the Conventions at the national and regional levels.
- lack of funding to support national institutions in the implementation of the conventions

Agenda item 7. Identification and discussion on future activities and recommendations

The Chair invited the Consultation to table activities and recommendation from which a comprehensive programme could be developed to address the pressing needs and problems of the regions.

To address the problems identified under agenda item 6, the meeting recommended the following actions:

Institutional

- UNEP should clearly define the roles of the UNEP Regional Offices in relation to the Regional Coordinating Units.
- UNEP should establish an administrative focal point within UNON to deal with the Regional Seas
- UNEP Water Branch should facilitate the negotiation of agreements between the UNEP administered Global Convention and the Regional Seas Programmes.
- UNEP should establish a focal point within Water Branch for all regional seas
- UNEP Regional Seas Programme and support thereof by the Water Branch should be strengthened.
- the move by UNEP towards a geographic approach in dealing with environmental affairs. (e.g. GEO report) on a continental approach

Co-ordination

- UNEP's Regional Seas Programme should be visible in UNEP's structure.
- UNEP Water Branch should prepare on the basis of this meeting a comprehensive support programme for the Regional Seas to include, but not be limited to, the facilitation of:

- a programming mechanism to achieve synergy among Regional Seas work programmes.
    - joint bilateral activities
    - inter-regional transfer of technology
    - inter-regional technical assistance capacity building programmes with the evolution of the Conventions and Action Plans to become more service minded and development issue orientated.

- UNEP Water branch should facilitate the attendance of Regional Coordinators at Global Convention meetings.
- UNEP Water Branch should facilitate the organization of regular meetings between the oil industry and the Regional Seas Programme.
- agreements should be reached to incorporate the implications and concerns of the fisheries sector in the programmes.
- UNEP Water Branch should organize regular meetings of the coordinators.

National Involvement

- a document be prepared outlining the socio-economic benefits and implications of the Conventions at the national level.

Technical Support

- UNEP Water Branch should facilitate the development of GEF projects for the respective Regional Seas Programmes.
- a methodology should be developed to undertake a cost benefit analysis of the effectiveness of the region Conventions, to include determining the cumulative impact of the programme.
- develop programmes specifically related to the implementation of the GPA as identified under Agenda item 8.
- request OSPAR to support capacity building (on the job exchange training programmes) for the Regional Seas Programme

Agenda item 8. Relationship between Coordinating Units and Global Programme of Action Coordination Office, including functioning of the regional clearing house

Mr. Vidal introduced the document entitled "Consideration of further steps, timetable and modalities for the activities of the GPA Coordination Office-The Hague" [UNEP(WATER)/GPA-IG.2/4], a discussion paper on how to make the GPA implementation plan operational. The participants were invited to offer comments (Annex VII) and suggestions on the document.

Based on the Global Programme of Action and the GPA Implementation Plan, the GPA Coordination Office identified eight priority tasks for immediate consideration:

a) develop and facilitate preparation of scientific assessments on the impacts of land-based activities on the marine environment;

b) foster/facilitate development and implementation of national and regional programmes of action on land-based activities;

c) establish and coordinate the GPA clearing-house mechanism;

d) mobilize financial resources;

e) awareness building and education;

f) involvement of non-government organizations;

(g) reporting and reviewing progress in GPA implementation; and

(h) continued consultations on GPA implementation.

Enhanced cooperation with the different lead agencies and with regional offices is indispensable, particularly to get proper information. Opening of "kiosks" on the Web can attract potential providers of information. Lessons also can be learned from other clearing house sites. It is intended to have a step wise approach whereby some experts, representatives of lead agencies and potential donors can soon sit together and develop a short-term work plan. A single source category (e.g., sewage) can be used as an initial example.

(IV) Mobilization of Financial Resources

Mr. Robbert Droop (Senior Expert, GPA Coordination Office-The Hague) introduced this issue. The topic of funding of the GPA Coordination Office activities will be introduced under a separate heading. It was stressed that assistance under the GPA can take place during the entire process of definition, preparation and implementation of individual projects for GPA implementation. UNEP will provide the information and assistance such that Governments will be able to identify priorities (country-driven projects). The GPA Coordination Office intends to focus on a number of issues:

a) development of national and regional programmes of action;

b) enhancing regional cooperation;

c) capacity-building; and

d) supporting participation processes while facilitating linkages to activities of the partner agencies;

In regard to potential donors, Mr. Droop emphasized that basic information on the implementation strategy, project proposals from Governments, and insight on critical success factors for project implementation, should be available before contacting the donors. The option of a "Donor Dialogue" is being considered, to promote awareness among donors of the objectives of the GPA and the potential for their participation in funding.

A "Small Projects Fund" was considered in order to mobilize adequate funding for those projects which usually remain out of normal funding channels, because of their small size, as well as for attracting contributions that may arise from a great variety of small donors.

It was stressed that adequate attention will be put on mobilization of resources at the national level, through national revenue mechanisms and from the private sector.

(V) Awareness raising

The GPA Coordination Office proposes to begin, as a matter of urgency, with a provisional version of a newsletter, preferably on the Web through the clearing-house. Such a newsletter was considered important to facilitating wider knowledge on the numerous activities underway at various levels.

The GPA Coordination Office also suggests development of a Communication Strategy, including information campaigns and the use of various media.

(VI) Involvement of non-government organizations

The role of non-governmental organizations in interacting with the general public on GPA issues is of major importance, and will be central to the GPA strategy. The participants were informed that UNEP will invite global non-governmental organizations to an informal consultation similar to this one. The term "non-governmental organizations" is understand to include a wide variety of such organizations, including associations of local authorities, universities and stakeholders.

(VII) Reporting and reviewing progress in GPA implementation

Mr. Vidal introduced this issue. UNEP will regularly report on progress in implementing the GPA to, *inter alia*, the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources (which together form a GPA steering committee on technical cooperation and assistance), UNEP's Governing Council, Governing Bodies of relevant organizations, institutions and programmes involved in GPA implementation, and to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

The primary information source of information on the status of activities are the reports received from Governments. Thus, the GPA Coordination Office will, in consultation with Governments, develop a procedure and format for reporting. In collaboration with its partner agencies, UNEP plans to convene the first GPA intergovernmental review by the year 2000. It is proposed that an *ad hoc* intergovernmental review be convened in 1999, in conjunction with the 7th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

(VIII) Continued consultations on GPA implementation

Mr. Vidal stressed the fact that the GPA Coordination Office will continue to seek advice for its present and future work from a variety of sources. In addition to the regular formal channels used by UNEP, informal consultations with Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals will continue.

Mr. Droop briefed the participants of the possibility that the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) may support GPA implementation projects in developing countries through, *inter alia*, possible funding three demonstration projects during 1999-2001. It was noted that the GEF does not consider the GPA *per se* as eligible for funding, although projects that meet the criteria for GEF funding under its International Waters Portfolio could be considered for funding.

Mr. Vidal indicated that Governments would soon be approached with an official request for financial or in-kind contributions to the above-mentioned activities.

A number of issues related to the need to involve Governments in preparation of the assessments (e.g), global assessments on land-based activities and of the state of the marine environment) and link the assessment to public awareness. The latter should acknowledge the particular local circumstances. It was suggested that public awareness should focus on public mobilization. There is also an important role for the media, as well as non-governmental organizations, in this process.

The pro-active role that the GPA Coordination Office will take in facilitating implementation of the GPA was welcomed. It was suggested that the office can play a catalytic role at the technical level, eg. development of guidelines to track oil polluters. Taking into account that sewage is considered one of the main problems in the developing world, the GPA Coordination Office mentioned the possibility of having a World Conference on Sewage. This possibility was welcomed by the meeting, pointing out that sewage is a world-wide problem on which large amounts of money are spent (eg. treatment plants) and involve many sectors of society. Catalyzing the cooperation between UN agencies in facilitating implementation of the GPA is a challenge for the office.

It was suggested that regular meetings of the coordinators of regional seas programmes (UNEP and non-UNEP) could be organized on a thematic basis to discuss issues of regional importance, e.g., oil pollution, tourism. To this end, it was proposed that GPA focal points be established within the Regional Coordination Units/Secretariats. The meetings could be rotated among regions.

On the GPA clearing-house it was pointed out that some regions need technical assistance to establish the regional components. The possibility that the needed assistance be incorporated in regional project proposals was mentioned. On resource mobilization, the GPA Coordination Office pointed out that, in accordance with the GPA the first priority is to find funds from domestic sources. It was suggested that most funds should be given as loans which will be paid back through domestic funds. The GPA Coordination Office can assist in the formulation of proposals, organizing training workshops and development of guidelines.

Agenda item 9. Briefing on the CSD7 process

The Chair briefed the Consultation on developments with regard to CSD7 and the request made by the Special Session of UNEP's Governing Council. She informed the meeting that the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans was the Task Manager for Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 and was responsible for preparing the draft Secretary-General's report on Oceans and Seas.

From 1-5 March the working group on Oceans will meet during the Intersessional Meeting of the CSD. The task is to collect information at the national level on the status of the implementation of Chapter 17 of Agenda 21. Furthermore, UNEP decided to include Oceans on the agenda for the 20th session of UNEP's Governing Council, as further input to the CSD process. The CSD process will also consider the questions of poverty and socio-economic development issues.

In order to be ready for the high level Committee meeting to be held in December and for the Governing Council, documentation must be ready by the end of September for contributions outline of which to be sent to the Coordinators before the end of the year. The report should focus on what the emerging issues are based on the available information.

New Zealand has been elected chair of the CSD7, consequently they have offered some funds to UNEP to coordinate national developing countries inputs (to include small islands), the output of which will contribute to CSD7 and UNEP Governing Council processes. She welcomed OSPAR, Helcom and Arctic to participate in this.

The UK have informed UNEP that they will be organizing a similar workshop, as a contribution to the CSD7 process as they had previously done in 1995.

The Chair invited the meeting to submit any proposals the participants may have to facilitate this process. It was noted that there is a need to consider tourism within the process on the MAP and CAR have 2/3 of the international tourism of the world. To this end, it was agreed that MAP would take the lead in preparing a report in cooperation with the respective Regional Seas Programme to be submitted through UNEP to the CSD. It was also suggested that oceans in relation to trade and transportation should be considered. IOI accepted to initiate preparation of a first draft of a report to consider this matter in cooperation with UNEP Water Branch. A third issue brought to light was the need to address marine biodiversity as well as coastal zones.

Furthermore, the Secretariat informed the consultation that the Government of Mozambique in cooperation with the Government of Finland, UNESCO and UNEP, is organizing the Pan-African Conference on Sustainable Integrated Coastal Management (PACSICOM) (Maputo, 18-25 July 1998). Participants are expected from African coastal and island States, United Nations agencies, other governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as from States with interest in integrated sustainable coastal management in Africa. The aim of the conference is to assist in establishing strategic and coastal management in Africa.

Agenda item 10. Any other business

It was proposed that the second Inter-regional Seas Programme Consultation be held in connection with the Governing Council in February 1999. It was also proposed that future meetings be hosted on a rotational basis by the Regional Coordinating Units to be decided.

No other matters were raised.

Agenda item 11. Adoption of the report of the consultation

The draft report of the Consultation was reviewed and approved with some amendments.

Agenda item 12. Closure of the consultation

The Consultation was closed by Ms Terttu Melvasalo, Director, Water Branch at 4.00 p.m. on 26 June 1998. She thanked the GPA Coordination Office for hosting the Consultation and the support provided for the running of the meeting. She also thanked the participants for their valuable contributions.

The participants acknowledged with appreciation the excellent organization of the meeting and congratulated its technical secretary Mr. Paul Akiwumi.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the consultation
2. Organization of the consultation and adoption of the agenda
3. Report of the Water Branch Ocean and Coastal Areas Programme
4. Summary presentations by Regional Secretariats/Regional Coordinating Units on the implementation of the Conventions and Action Plans.
5. Presentation by the Coordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Regional Seas Programme on the evolution of the Mediterranean Action Plan and Barcelona Convention.
6. Identification of and discussion on fundamental problems in the implementation of the Regional Seas Programme.
7. Identification and discussion on future activities and recommendations
8. Relationship between Coordinating Units and Global Programme of Action Coordination Office, including functioning of the regional clearing house.
9. Briefing on the CSD7 process
10. Any other business
11. Adoption of the report of the consultation
12. Closure of the consultation

ANNEX III

PROVISIONAL LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Working documents

UNEP/WBRS.1/1	Provisional Agenda
UNEP/WBRS.1/2	Provisional Annotated Agenda
UNEP/WBRS.1/3	Report of the Water Branch Ocean and Coastal Areas Programme
UNEP/WBRS.1/4	Information on the status and implementation of the Regional Seas Programmes Conventions and Action Plans
UNEP/WBRS.1/5	Presentation by the Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan (MEDU) on the evolution of the Mediterranean Action Plan and Barcelona Convention
UNEP/WBRS.1/6	Consideration of further steps, time-table and modalities for the activities of the GPA Coordination Office - The Hague.
UNEP/WBRS.1/7	Report of the Consultation (to be prepared during the consultation)

Information documents

UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.1	Provisional list of documents
UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.2	Provisional list of participants
UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.3	1998 International Year of the Ocean update
UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.4	Eastern African Action Plan - UNEP Home Page Online information
UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.5	Status Report on Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.6	Environmental Information System for the Offshore Oil n& Gas Industry
UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.7	Results Exploratory Discussions on a possible UNEP-ICLARM proposal for the United Nations Foundation for a Global Coral Reef Management Umbrella Project
UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.8	Potential Contribution of the International Ocean Institute towards the GPA - LBA implementation.
UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.9	The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)
UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.10	International Waters Distance Learning and Training Project, Phase 1 (Draft). A GEF Project Proposal prepared by UNDP, with preliminary comment from UNEP.
UNEP/WBRS.1 Inf.11	Cooperation with Other International Organizations (OSPAR)