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**11th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas
Conventions and Action Plans**

Bangkok, Thailand, 5th - 8th October 2009

**Report of the 10th Global Meeting of the Regional
Seas Conventions & Action Plans (RSCAPs) held in
Guayaquil, Ecuador, 25-27th November 2008**

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SESSION 1

Climate Change and the regional Seas Programmes

Background

- Human-induced climate change is a given
- Tackling this requires both mitigation and adaptation
- Climate change presents an opportunity for regional Seas Conventions and Action plans
- There is a need to better articulate a collective role

Supporting information demonstrated

- Investment in the UNEP LME Report and its analysis
- The Strategic follow-up to the Jeddah Declaration
- An analysis of the impacts of climate change in coastal and marine systems
- The need to deal with uncertainty and to move from yearly to decadal planning horizons

Issues raised by the presentations

LME Report

- LME approach is about advocating the Ecosystem Approach (5 modules with indicators)
- Climate change is a pressure exacerbating others (over-fishing, pollution, habitat destruction, nutrient run-off)
- This baseline study, based on selected indicators allows comparison between LMEs
- Climate change related problem areas are evident (e.g. areas of super-fast warming) but implications are complex (e.g. fisheries biomass yields)
- Results link clearly to socio-economics and governance

UNEP Climate Change Strategy

- Global leadership based on recognized strengths (Bali Action Plan)
- 3 pillars – building adaptive capacity; increasing ecosystem resilience; mobilizing knowledge
- Marrying Medium Term Strategy (MTS) with Marine and Coastal Strategy incorporating climate change as a priority
- Practical focus to include – preparedness (especially for SIDS); access to financial resources; resilience; funding mechanisms; ecosystem based management; and planning tools

Black Sea Conference on Climate Change

- Aim – raising awareness; generating buy-in; promoting roundtable discussions
- Exchange of mitigation and adaptation ideas
- Result – revision of Strategic Action Plan

Mediterranean Action Plan

- Making clear the consequences of business as usual (sectors affected)
- Adaptation measures (e.g reducing water demand, set-back guidance)
- Challenges recognised – peace, migrants, knowledge gaps, need for innovative diplomatic efforts

MBARI

- Distinction between climate change and ocean acidification – latter is highly predictable
- Issue is about the relationship and interaction between natural cycles and anthropogenic induced change, where ocean information is seriously lacking (compared to terrestrial)
- Effects are not uniformly distributed and the ultimate consequences are uncertain
- To establish knowns and unknowns – need to model (relate predictions to management practices)
- How do we evaluate the merits of different mitigation strategies?

Issues raised during discussion

1. Regional Seas mandate is clear
 - Climate change was not on the agenda when most Regional Seas Conventions were initially negotiated
 - However, all have a clear mandate to manage ecosystems in an holistic way
 - Much of the existing work is related to and consistent with the UNEP climate change strategy
 - This is particular priority for SIDS
2. Mitigation versus adaptation
 - Mitigation in the form of emissions reduction is a first choice
 - Adaptation is essential to buy time for mitigation to take effect. This must cut across sectors, engage relevant organizations and be backed by governments
3. Need for a funding mechanism
 - There is a need to improve knowledge about how adaptation can be financed
 - Social marketing is needed to explain the full costs of climate change (linked also to the value of ecosystem services)
4. Practical and pragmatic initiatives
 - Important to demonstrate practical options (especially for SIDS)
 - Examples considered include crops able to cope with more saline conditions, retreat implications, species selection for mangrove restoration etc

- Care needed not to re-invent the wheel – NB. CBD tools and case studies.
5. Decision system methodology to evaluate mitigation strategies
 - Is there value in considering a pilot within the regional Seas? CPPS perhaps.
 6. Integrated approaches
 - Collaboration needed
 - Any approach must include the private sector who are part of the problem, have political influence and access to resources
 7. Communication challenges
 - Need to accept variability and uncertainty about impacts over long time periods
 - Important to bring together scientists and policy makers
 - Role for raising public awareness and community attitude change
 8. New impetus
 - Important to recognize that climate change is giving a new global impetus to coastal and marine issues. Highlights links to whole hydrological systems (inland to ocean)
 - Common priority issues are evident in national adaptation strategies (water resources, food security, ICZM). Regional priorities can influence national planning exercises with links to infrastructure decisions and policies for key sectors (e.g. tourism) and environmental health.

Conclusions

- No new instrument is needed
- Regional Seas and UNEP must engage with other sectors
- Focus on an integrated approach with practical outcomes

Action Requested

1. All Regional Seas Conventions to consider incorporating climate change explicitly when revising their Strategies and/or Action Plans;
2. UNEP to produce an information sheet on what financing opportunities are available for climate change measures;
3. Consider nominating a pilot Region to evaluate different mitigation strategies
4. Recognise good practice and adaptation efforts already underway within Regional Seas – e.g. Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, MAP ICZM Protocol
5. Promote Regional vulnerability modeling and regional adaptation strategies
6. Ensure that the Regional Seas Conventions have a presence and a voice within the wider climate change debate
7. Facilitate raising community awareness – including work with and involvement of the private sector; and
8. Input to the Regional Ministerial Forum (CPPS) to be a basis for input to the Monado Declaration

SESSION 2

Ecosystem Management and the Regional Seas Programme

Strategic Directions

UNEP Mid-term Strategy (MTS) 2010 – 2013

- Represents a new direction: thematic, cross disciplinary, integrated approach
- Work programmes will be results based with measurable impacts
- 6 themes and sets of expected outcomes

Marine and Coastal Strategy

- EBM focus
- Environmental benefits to humanity
- Establishing where UNEP is best placed to contribute
- Road map (in hand) based on identification of strengths and opportunities

Matrix of objectives (MTS x MCS)

- Represents a means to operationalise, prioritise, identify partners
- Major themes – healthy oceans, marine ecosystems for humanity, reconciling resource use and marine conservation, vulnerable people and places
- Modular implementation
- Basis for strategic partnerships with other institutions

UNEP Ecosystem Management Programme

Development of assistance for practical implementation of EBM

Recognizing:

- Definitions
- Ecosystem services
- Need for trade offs
- Informed by socio-economic data

Case Study: Nairobi Convention

- Input to West Indian Ocean Strategic Action Plan
- Training: state of environment, governance, ecosystem approach to fisheries, spatial planning, sustainable financing, operationalising)
- Need for region specific, user friendly, Ecosystem Approach manuals

Area-based management / Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)

Key element of future work of UNEP

- Reflects competition for marine space
- Need for cross-sectoral planning
- Recognizes that some international area-based legal instruments are already in place
- Different views of MPAs (scope for reconciliation of environment and fisheries interests)
- Complicated by climate change (e.g. sandeel population dynamics)

- Must incorporate uncertainty
- Future: tools, mapping services, mainstreaming MPAs
- Pilot projects: proof of concept, lessons learned, dissemination (International Workshop, January 2009)

Related initiatives

- a. UNEP Continental Shelf Programme
 - Grid Arundal support to developing countries
 - CLCS timing issues (submission, processing)
 - Wider ongoing role for Grid Arundal expertise
 - Capacity building in ocean and coastal management
- b. UNEP Global Marine Litter Initiative
 - 12 regional contributors: situation reports and action plans
 - Implications of abandoned and lost fishing gear
 - Operational guidelines (world expert group)
 - BBC documentary on Pacific Gyre
 - Black Sea case study: link between plastic in nets and dolphin bycatch
 - Positive feedback to UNEP re pump priming exercise
- c. Coral Reefs: Crime Scene Investigation (CSI)
 - Determining causality and response
 - Mo standards (mitigation, restoration)
 - Development of workshop approach – establishing chain of custody / illegal activity
 - Workshop includes – lectures and demos, dry field runs, crime scene dives, mock trial
 - Future application to illegal marine trade and/or temperate habitat damage

Discussion

1. Call for consistent use of terminology – CBD definitions, 12 principles and EBM operational guidance
2. Need to examine what already exists in Regions (re MSP)
3. MAP commitment to apply EBM progressively, ICZM Protocol, 4 sub-regions of Mediterranean (biogeographic and oceanographic parameters)
4. Some skepticism as to whether MSP can really work for developing countries
5. CBD have produced EBA source book, case studies, barriers and success stories. COP9 stressed that tools and guidance must be effectively used
6. MSP = subset of ICZM (pragmatic first step approach)
7. Recognition that litter is a GPA issue (80% land-based sources)
8. UNEP litter work influential. European Community has included litter as a qualitative descriptor for good environmental status within the new Marine Strategy Framework Directive
9. In SE Pacific small marine litter projects have raised significant interest + community acceptance and support. In Caribbean it has been integral to waste management approach

Action Requested

1. RS to respond to MTS x MCS matrix consultation
2. Note EBM practical implementation assistance opportunities
3. MSP is an emerging tool, necessary activity, information management role
4. RS to take advantage of EBA where UNEP has invested knowledge/understanding/capability
5. RS to take litter data and integrate with strategic directions as appropriate (cf. Black Sea)

SESSION 3

Cooperation with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

Background

- Essential partnerships
- Challenges for which cooperation is vital
- Imminent deadlines for key products requiring RS input

CBD: In-depth review of Jakarta Mandate

- Context
- Realisation that 2010 / 2012 targets will not be met
- In-depth review of process underway
- SBSTTA 14 in May 2010, COP 10 in October 2010 (information gathering phase until May 2009)
- Opportunity to alert COP to key issues
- Expert workshops planned in 2009
- International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) Campaign 2010

IOC-UNESCO and RS

- IOC remit to deliver better knowledge of oceans and coastal zones (oceanography)
- Advent of real time data and operational oceanography
- Limitations of UNCLOS
- Long history of cooperation and links(MoUs) now joint work needed to create new more dynamic management tools
- AoA 2009 – will feed into CSD Report in 2014

IMO GloBallast update

- Helping developing countries reduce impact of alien species in ballast water
- Significant budget directed at global and regional activities including training
- National activities co-ordinated by lead agency
- Communication outreach success (DVD, services)
- Global industry alliance

Discussion points

1. 2 way street. Important that MEAs partner & feedback in addition to extra reporting requirements
2. Importance of RS representation at MEA technical meetings. Role for UNEP to provide legal mechanism to represent and feedback
3. Reporting = burdensome and demanding. UNEP support to establish common framework/timetable re advice re requirements of GA
4. Important to note in CBD evaluation that RS do not cover all marine regions. Avoid duplication and acknowledge gaps

Action Requested

1. From CBD
 - Active participation in in-depth review
 - Recognize activities through IYB Campaign
 - Bring expertise to proposed expert workshops
2. From IOC-UNESCO
 - Note that each of the RS Conventions (18 or 21?) must create a report for CSD in 2014
3. From Glo Ballast
 - Note the important supporting role of UNEP RS

SESSION 4

Sustainable financing and legal instruments to further the implementation of the RS Work Programme

GEF Financing: Targeting transboundary water systems

- Financing implementation (direct costs) needs to be considered in terms of cost/benefit of agreed actions
- Financing is for incremental costs (i.e. in addition to baseline finance)
- GEF funding requires co-funding and capacity
- 6 focal areas (many relevant to marine and coastal environments)
- GEF IV (2006 – 2010) – 4 Strategic Programmes
- Ecosystem Approach for LMEs (typical projects illustrated for International Waters)
- Most RS eligible for GEF projects but some areas where GEF/RS do not fully articulate
- UNEP efforts to better interate have been achieved since 2006
- Possible areas for GEF support were outlined and practical examples (Mediterranean, Caribbean) highlighted

Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CReW)

- Sewage outfall pollution and domestic wastewater remains a priority concern for the Caribbean
- Protocol awaiting ratification but other specific constraints identified, that cannot be tackled due to lack of funds and other calls competing for funding
- GEF seed funding may lead to larger revolving fund under GEF V, facilitated by the Inter American Development Bank

- UNEP advantage apparent on the basis that funding alone is not enough – success requires technology transfer, using lessons learned, evaluation of various technological solutions, partnership approach
- Important to guarantee future financial sustainability
- In the interests of health, jobs, future lives

Financing and legal mechanisms in the Caspian Sea

- Environmental dialogue = means of avoiding conflict
- Highly stressed environment, possible window on climate change
- Caspian has received \$30m over 10 years between 5 countries (good investment)
- But:
 - Problems with enforcement and implementation of strategies and plans
 - Environmental investment is insufficient despite range of available mechanisms
 - Progress is impeded by political issues and challenge of fisheries
 - Continued GEF support needed / expected
- This threatens prospects for future sustainable financing

Discussion

1. Diverse experience with GEF system
2. Marine issues within other priority areas of GEF were noted
3. Selection of GEF priority areas is a difficulty. The GEF process does not allow Agency participation in priority setting (to avoid conflict of interest), thus inevitable that GEF and RS priorities will not be completely aligned
4. Need to consider value of ecosystem services (possible direction for Caspian)
5. Common problem with involving others beyond Ministry of Environment (ie Finance, Planning)
6. Tensions where co-ordination mechanisms need strengthening in order to maximize effectiveness of GEF funding (e.g. Abidjan Convention GEF LME projects). Possible solution through development of MoUs
7. Possible HELCOM link to be explored with Black Sea and Caspian on invasive species (NB. Baltic Sea Action Plan)
8. GEF funding deemed important at country level but co-financing is a major constraint to developing GEF proposals – must be innovative
9. Communication needed between GEF focal points and Environment focal points

Action requested

- Explore opportunity for GEF funding to contribute to the MTS/MCS in 4 strategic areas
- Support needed with GEF V bids. Urgent consideration needed on how to influence GEF agenda setting – this will operationalise other funding / resources
- Better links to be established with banks
- Examine whether RS should revisit its mandate and link more closely with the global decision making system

SESSION 5

Enhancing Communications

Factsheets on emerging issues

- OSPAR has identified a range of emerging issues that could provide food for thought, practical ideas for other RS.
- Range of leaflets will include marine litter, marine spatial planning, cooperation with fisheries, marine science practice (including ABNJ), ocean chemistry issues, selection of threatened species and habitats, and establishing monitoring priorities. These are OSPAR specific but could be related to other areas and/or added to by other RS

Regional Seas Info Xchange Platform

- Aims to connect RS, keep alive to emerging issues
- Web-based tool – promoting consistency of communication
- Ability to track what is happening in different regions, avoid clashes and promote synergies
- Features include a discussion forum, document repository, up to date contact information, newsletter sharing

Discussion

- Could platform be used as a one stop shop, with email alerts to users?
- Need to avoid duplication – guidance important
- Good opportunity to facilitate exchange between professions. How open should the platform be?
- Extension to video conferencing?
- Need to be conscious of overload, in which case enthusiasm will wain
- Potential for factsheets to also serve as means to inform high level persons attending COP

Action requested

- Examine search function of platform
- Note high expectation of RS role in ABNJ
- Consider adding invasives issue to leaflets – aggravated by climate change, SPREP Island learning network example of good practice