

# WASHINGTON DECLARATION ON PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES

*The representatives of Governments and the European Commission participating in the Conference held in Washington from 23 October to 3 November 1995,*

**Affirming** the need and will to protect and preserve the marine environment for present and future generations,

**Reaffirming** the relevant provisions of chapters 17, 33 and 34 of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,

**Recognizing** the interdependence of human populations and the coastal and marine environment, and the growing and serious threat from land-based activities, to both human health and well-being and the integrity of coastal and marine ecosystems and biodiversity,

**Further recognizing** the importance of integrated coastal area management and the catchment-area-based approach as means of coordinating programmes aimed at preventing marine degradation from land-based activities with economic and social development programmes,

**Also recognizing** that the alleviation of poverty is an essential factor in addressing the impacts of land-based activities on coastal and marine areas,

**Noting**, that there are major differences among the different regions of the world, and the States which they comprise, in terms of environmental, economic and social conditions and level of development which will lead to different judgments on priorities in addressing problems related to the degradation of the marine environment by land-based activities,

**Acknowledging** the need to involve major groups in national, regional and international activities to address degradation of the marine environment by land-based activities, Strongly supporting the processes set forth in decisions 18/31 and 18/32 of 25 May 1995 of the Governing Council of the

United Nations Environment Programme for addressing at the global level the priority issues of persistent organic pollutants and adequate treatment of waste water,

***Having therefore adopted*** the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities,

***Hereby declare their commitment to protect and preserve the marine environment from the impacts of land-based activities, and***

***Declare their intention to do so by:***

1. Setting as their common goal sustained and effective action to deal with all land-based impacts upon the marine environment, specifically those resulting from sewage, persistent organic pollutants, radioactive substances, heavy metals, oils (hydrocarbons), nutrients, sediment mobilization, litter, and physical alteration and destruction of habitat;
2. Developing or reviewing national action programmes within a few years on the basis of national priorities and strategies;
3. Taking forward action to implement these programmes in accordance with national capacities and priorities;
4. Cooperating to build capacities and mobilize resources for the development and implementation of such programmes, in particular for developing countries, especially the least developed countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing States (hereinafter referred to as “countries in need of assistance”);
5. Taking immediate preventive and remedial action, wherever possible, using existing knowledge, resources, plans and processes;
6. Promoting access to cleaner technologies, knowledge and expertise to address land-based activities that degrade the marine environment, in particular for countries in need of assistance;
7. Cooperating on a regional basis to coordinate efforts for maximum efficiency and to facilitate action at the national level, including, where appropriate, becoming parties to and strengthening regional cooperative agreements and creating new agreements where necessary;
8. Encouraging cooperative and collaborative action and partnerships, among governmental institutions and organizations, communities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations which have relevant responsibilities and/or experience;

9. Encouraging and/or making available external financing, given that funding from domestic sources and mechanisms for the implementation of the Global Programme of Action by countries in need of assistance may be insufficient;
10. Promoting the full range of available management tools and financing options in implementing national or regional programmes of action, including innovative managerial and financial techniques, while recognizing the differences between countries in need of assistance and developed States;
11. Urging national and international institutions and the private sector, bilateral donors and multilateral funding agencies to accord priority to projects within national and regional programmes to implement the Global Programme of Action and encouraging the Global Environment Facility to support these projects;
12. Calling upon the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the regional development banks, as well as the agencies within the United Nations system to ensure that their programmes support (through, inter alia, financial cooperation, capacity-building and institutional-strengthening mechanisms) the regional structures in place for the protection of the marine environment;
13. According priority to implementation of the Global Programme of Action within the United Nations system, as well as in other global and regional institutions and organizations with responsibilities and capabilities for addressing marine degradation from land-based activities, and specifically:
  - (a) Securing formal endorsement of those parts of the Global Programme of Action that are relevant to such institutions and organizations and incorporating the relevant provisions into their work programmes;
  - (b) Establishing a clearing-house mechanism to provide decision makers in all States with direct access to relevant sources of information, practical experience and scientific and technical expertise and to facilitate effective scientific, technical and financial cooperation as well as capacity-building; and
  - (c) Providing for periodic intergovernmental review of the Global Programme of Action, taking into account regular assessments of the state of the marine environment;
14. Promoting action to deal with the consequences of sea-based activities, such as shipping, offshore activities and ocean dumping, which require national and/or regional actions on land, including establishing adequate reception and recycling facilities;

15. Promoting action to deal with the consequences of sea-based activities, such as shipping, offshore activities and ocean dumping, which require national and/or regional actions on land, including establishing adequate reception and recycling facilities;
16. Giving priority to the treatment and management of waste water and industrial effluents, as part of the overall management of water resources, especially through the installation of environmentally and economically appropriate sewage systems, including studying mechanisms to channel additional resources for this purpose expeditiously to countries in need of assistance;
17. Requesting the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in close partnership with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the United Nations Development Programme and other relevant organizations, to prepare proposals for a plan to address the global nature of the problem of inadequate management and treatment of waste water and its consequences for human health and the environment, and to promote the transfer of appropriate and affordable technology drawn from the best available techniques;
18. Acting to develop, in accordance with the provisions of the Global Programme of Action, a global, legally binding instrument for the reduction and/or elimination of emissions, discharges and, where appropriate, the elimination of the manufacture and use of the persistent organic pollutants identified in decision 18/32 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme. The nature of the obligations undertaken must be developed recognizing the special circumstances of countries in need of assistance. Particular attention should be devoted to the potential need for the continued use of certain persistent organic pollutants to safeguard human health, sustain food production and to alleviate poverty in the absence of alternatives and the difficulty of acquiring substitutes and transferring of technology for the development and/or production of those substitutes; and
19. Elaborating the steps relating to institutional follow-up, including the clearing-house mechanism, in a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-first session, and in that regard, States should coordinate with the United Nations Environment Programme, as secretariat of the Global Programme of Action, and other relevant agencies within the United Nations system in the development of the resolution and include it on the agenda of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its inter-sessional meeting in February 1996 and its session in April 1996. Washington, D.C., 1 November 1995