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Seventeenth Meeting of the Coordinating
Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
on the East Asian Seas Action Plan

Bangkok, Thailand, 9-11 March 2004

**REPORT OF THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE
COORDINATING BODY ON THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA (COBSEA)
ON THE EAST ASIAN SEAS ACTION PLAN**

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the meeting

1. Mr. Surendra Shrestha, the Regional Director of the UNEP Regional Office for the Asia and Pacific, and the Interim Co-ordinator, called the meeting to order and officially opened the meeting. On behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Mr. Shrestha welcomed participants from Member countries, and organisations participating as observers in the COBSEA meeting, and highlighted the importance that UNEP and the Executive Director attach to the successful implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan and the future strategy of COBSEA.

2. His remarks at the opening included: this meeting will need to set a policy direction for COBSEA building as the national priorities to assist in addressing transboundary and common issues of concern; the need to enhance ownership through increased participatory process; the need to build on projects such as the South China Sea, PEMSEA, and the ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment; the need to consider sustainable financing through the established Trust Fund mechanism. Finally, Mr. Shrestha thanked Sida for the generous support to the Action Plan, and for allowing a large degree of flexibility in using the funds. He expressed confidence that all issues up for consideration would be resolved, and wished the participants a fruitful and successful meeting.

3. Representatives from COBSEA member countries included Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Representatives from Sida, SEAFDEC, the Swedish National Board of Fisheries, ASEAN Secretariat, FAO, IOC/WESTPAC of UNESCO, SEA START RC, UNEP RRC.AP, NACA and UNEP/GEF attended as observers. Dr. Chou Loke Ming, Independent Consultant, also attended the meeting. The list of participants and observers appears as Annex I to this report.

4. Participants were invited to introduce themselves and give opening statements on behalf of their countries. All countries expressed their commitment to improving coordination and confronting the challenge to coordinate and work together with other regional programmes. The government of Thailand was thanked for hosting the meeting. Delegates expressed their appreciation to Sida for its support to the EAS Action Plan and confirmed their commitment to work together to make the best use of the support to benefit the region.

Agenda Item 2. Organisation of the meeting*(a) Designation of officers*

5. The delegate from Thailand nominated Mr. Yue Ruisheng from China as the Chairperson of the meeting. The nomination was seconded by the delegate from Singapore, and Mr. Yue was duly elected Chairperson by acclamation.

6. The delegate from Cambodia nominated Dr. Maitree Duangsawasdi from Thailand as Vice-Chairperson of the meeting. The nomination was seconded by the delegate from China, and Dr. Duangsawasdi was duly elected as Vice-Chairperson by acclamation.

7. The delegate from Singapore proposed that Mr. Sok Vong from Cambodia be invited to serve as Rapporteur of the meeting. The nomination was agreed by the delegates, and Mr. Vong was duly elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

(b) Organisation of work

8. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to introduce this agenda item to explain the working and information documents for the meeting. The Secretariat proposed, and the meeting agreed, to carry out its work in plenary session, allowing for formulation of working groups as needed.

9. The meeting was conducted in English.

Agenda Item 3. Adoption of the agenda

10. The revised provisional Agenda was introduced to the meeting. The Technical Workshop held prior to the meeting proposed that agenda item, "COBSEA's Strategy" be discussed earlier, in order to have proper discussion in the later agenda items. The agenda was adopted as amended, and is attached as Annex II to this report.

Agenda Item 4. Report of the UNEP Executive Director on the progress of the implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan

11. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the "Report of the UNEP Executive Director." The presentation gave an overview of the consultant's review and assessment of COBSEA, current projects (coral reef monitoring, ICRAN, GPA, UNEP/GEF South China Sea (SCS)), secretariat staffing, fund raising, and the financial report.

4.1 Independent Review of COBSEA

12. The Secretariat presented the need for and achievements of the independent consultant hired to review implementation of the Action Plan since its inception, particularly, the national requirements, commitments and achievements. The terms of reference of the review were to: 1) identify potential co-operation and co-ordination between the regional organisations and the East Asian Seas Action Plan in order to maximise the benefits to the countries; 2) prepare a concrete proposal to strengthen the East Asian Seas Action Plan for 2003-2005; and 3) provide an analysis on the Secretariat's functions to the Action Plan. A more detailed presentation of the outcomes of the consultant's work and recommendations are described under Agenda Item 6.

4.2 The Project "Establishment of an Effective Coral Reef Monitoring Network in the East Asian Seas Region"

13. The Secretariat reported on the progress of the project's implementation. He informed the meeting that this project focused on coral reef data acquisition and monitoring. Capacity building was a large component of this project, where training workshops were conducted in Cambodia on ReefCheck and Line Intercept Transect methods of coral reef monitoring. Information about these and other regional monitoring activities are stored in a metadatabase established and hosted by Southeast Asia START Regional Centre (SEA START RC).

14. Two meetings of journalists were organised in Thailand and the Philippines, resulting in the publication of coral reef articles in national newspapers. TV and radio programmes were also produced to show the importance of coral reefs and problems with tourism, and to increase public awareness on the importance of coral reef protection.

15. The project has collaborated with another coral reef project the RCU is coordinating, namely the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) Project. Resources between the two projects were shared for activity implementation. One such example was the Small Grants Fund Programme that consisted of a call for proposals with selection of projects done by an external review panel. All together, seven projects were selected for funding, but two projects withdrew due to internal issues at their institutions. The maximum funding for each project was USD 10,000.

4.3 Implementation of the Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the East Asian Seas from the Effects of Land-based Activities

16. The Secretariat informed the meeting of the progress of this project. Through workshops, this project has reached agreement in preparing regional guidelines for control and treatment of sewage,

and built partnerships among participating countries. Preparation of regional guidelines to control the pollutants is a forthcoming activity. A regional GIS database on land-based pollutants has been established in collaboration with SEA START RC, with close co-operation with the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project.

4.4 The East Asian Seas Regional International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN)

17. As there was a separate agenda item to report on this project, the Secretariat presented a brief overview on the implementation of ICRAN. The project is funded by the United Nations Foundation with several organisations as partners to implement project activities. The Secretariat informed the meeting about the general objectives, funding mechanism, project sites, and activities.

4.5 Programme Implementation, Fund Raising, Financial Report, and Secretariat Staff

18. The Secretariat described the various types of external funding obtained by the EAS/RCU. These include funds from the US State Department, UN Foundation, Disney Foundation, and Sida. The amount of funds from all donors for 2002 to 2003, totalling around USD 500,000 was shown.

19. The financial report for 2002 to 2003 was presented, showing the allotments for each project, the expenditures, and the balance.

20. The Secretariat explained the current staff situation of the RCU. The Coordinator retired in February 2003. Since then, the RCU was staffed by a Programme Officer that worked half time with the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project, 2 support staffs, and 2 short-term consultants.

21. Finally, The Secretariat described the collaborative efforts between the RCU and other regional organisations, such as FAO, PEMSEA, UNESCO, ASEAN, SEA START RC, and international NGOs.

22. During the ensuing discussion, questions were raised about the status of the Trust Fund, specifically whether the figures included external contributions and the clarification of the USD 1 million allocated by the Executive Director. The Secretariat explained that the figures did not include external contributions. The Secretariat clarified that the USD 1 million is part of the total available Trust Fund, and is an administrative ceiling the Executive Director sets for use of the Trust Funds for a given period of time. It was also clarified that the use of the Trust Fund is entirely up to COBSEA.

23. The delegate from China, requested clarification on the mechanism of the co-operation and co-ordination with other organisations. The Secretariat provided information that some co-operation was secured through MOUs, and some were done through co-sponsor activities.

24. The representative of Sida informed the meeting of a set of recommendations of a new UNEP Regional Seas Strategy drafted at UNEP headquarters late last year. The representative of Sida suggested that the draft recommendations could be circulated to the member countries during the meeting since they touch upon the same issues as the consultant's review of COBSEA. The Secretariat was requested to circulate these recommendations to the member countries.

25. The delegate from Thailand stated that more regular communication between EAS/RCU and the participating countries would ensure effective operation of the EAS Action Plan, and smooth implementation of the relevant project activities. The Secretariat responded that this issue is important for the future of COBSEA, and confirmed to the meeting that EAS/RCU will certainly improve its communication with the participating countries.

26. After clarification provided by the Secretariat and all questions answered, the report was adopted by the Meeting.

Agenda Item 5. UNEP/GEF Project in the South China Sea

27. The Chairperson invited the Project Director to present the report on the UNEP/GEF Project titled, *"Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand."* The Project Director stated that the annual reports from the past two years, approved by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), have been made available to the COBSEA meeting.

28. The Project Director presented the chronological development of the Project, activities in 2002 and 2003, and future activities. He highlighted the uniqueness of the PSC compared to those of other GEF projects. Membership consists solely of two representatives from each participating country with no external members. He added that this arrangement has worked to the advantage of project implementation. In addition, experiences to date, successful indicators, problems faced in the two years of project implementation, and good practices were also introduced to the meeting.

29. During the ensuing discussion, the delegate from China expressed her appreciation to Dr. John Pernetta, the Project Director, Mr. Yihang Jiang, and all the staff in the Project Co-ordinating Unit. She stated that the Government of China was satisfied with the project implementation and achievements to date.

30. The delegate from Thailand raised a question regarding the relationship between COBSEA and the Project. The Project Director clarified that the South China Sea Project has its own decision making body approved by COBSEA, and any request from the participating countries could be taken by the national focal point to the Project Steering Committee for consideration.

31. The delegate from Singapore suggested that since COBSEA is a longer-term programme, the results and outcomes of the Project could be used by COBSEA to benefit the region. After clarification from the EAS/RCU, the Meeting noted that data and information from the South China Sea Project were being incorporated into the same databases of the EAS/RCU.

32. The representative of the ASEAN Secretariat sought clarification on the land-based pollution proposals mentioned in the second annual report. The Project Director replied that the two GEF proposals were presented to the Regional Working Group on Land-based Pollution for review, and relevant recommendations were transferred to the executing agencies.

33. The delegate from Singapore sought clarification whether there were any performance indicators used for the SCS project to show any reversed degradation trends at the end of the project. The Project Director explained that there are three indicators used to evaluate GEF projects, namely process, stress reduction, and environmental state indicators. However, for the SCS Project, only process indicators (timeline, workplan, disbursement of funds for project implementation, etc.) are being used. He added that there are other measures to demonstrate that the project has an impact on this region, and cited in-kind contributions, change in efforts towards sustainable marine and coastal management, and leveraging effects for other donors.

34. The meeting took note of the report provided by the Project Director, and encouraged close co-ordination and co-operation between the EAS Action Plan and the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project should be strengthened in the future.

Agenda Item 6. COBSEA's Strategy

35. The Chairperson invited Dr. Chou Loke Ming, Independent Consultant, to present his report on the review and assessment of COBSEA and the East Asian Seas Action Plan, and the recommendations for COBSEA's future. Eight recommendations covering financial, geographic, programme, and Secretariat functions were presented, and are attached to this report as Annex III.

36. The general conclusion of common views from interviews with national focal points was that

countries supported the continuation of the Action Plan, increasing contributions to the Trust Fund is difficult and unlikely in the near future, and there is a need for wider regional coordination and co-operation of activities. Common priority needs included transboundary issues (international waters), capacity development, habitat protection, pollution management, policy development, and public education.

37. The report highlighted some long-term focus areas on specific issues that included:

- Developing and maintaining regional databases and metadatabases;
- Promoting and improving networks of marine protected areas (MPAs);
- Restoring marine habitats;
- Assisting with State of the Marine Environment reporting for agencies;
- Reducing land-based sources of pollution;
- Expanding monitoring, assessment, and mapping; and
- Building capacity to counter environmental degradation and educating communities to care for marine resources.

38. During the Technical Workshop organised immediately prior to the COBSEA meeting, the recommendations were extensively discussed. The Chairperson invited the Chairperson of the Technical Workshop to report the Workshop Summary. This document included the participants' suggestions and comments on the recommendations that were presented to the 17th COBSEA Meeting for consideration. The Summary was distributed to all participants, and is attached to this report as Annex IV.

39. The delegate from Malaysia suggested that the Meeting, before looking at recommendation 1 and 2, should look at the workplan first, to ensure no duplication with other projects. Knowing the workload and finances required in the workplan would help the meeting make a better decision on recommendations #1 and #2. The Meeting agreed with the suggestion.

40. The Meeting then proceeded to consider each of the Consultant's recommendations. Recommendation #1 addressed financial contributions of member countries and sustainability of the Secretariat. The Meeting discussed Recommendation #1 as the financial contribution and sustainability of the Secretariat. Due to the complexity of the issue, the Meeting decided to form an ad-hoc working group to discuss Recommendation #1. The delegate from Singapore chaired the ad-hoc working group, and reported on the salient points of discussions and put forth two points for COBSEA's consideration (enclosed in Annex V).

41. The meeting noted the points presented by the ad hoc group and agreed on the passing of the resolution to UNEP (Annex VI).

42. The Meeting was informed: that UNEP will make a contribution of US \$ 300,000 to the Trust Fund for the period 2004/5. UNEP management would propose contribution of US \$ 200,000 to the Trust Fund for the period 2006/7, subject to approval by the Governing Council (GC). Beyond 2007, UNEP management would consider US \$ 50,000 annually to the Trust Fund and possible project support in line of Programme of Work approved by the GC. UNEP suggested the proposed budget be linked with: strengthening of COBSEA through increased ownership, increased partnerships, policy approach, increased communication with the member countries. The Meeting noted: there is US \$ 1 million in the Trust Fund; there is about US \$ 350,000 added each year; the need to reduce secretariat core budget to US \$ 350,000 to ensure the financing is sustainable; the need to make attempts to mobilize US \$ 1 million project funding for the next biennium. The meeting expressed appreciation to the Interim Co-ordinator, and discussed the financial issue extensively. The Meetings considered and agreed on the details of the financial sustainability model (Annex VII).

43. Recommendation #2 proposed that two professional officers are staffed in the Secretariat. After agreeing on the Workplan and budget, the meeting agreed to the proposed recommendation made by the Independent Consultant that two professional staff, at P5 and P3 levels, and 2 support

staff are needed to operate the Secretariat. In the meantime, the Meeting felt that as the donor-funded projects have budgeted for project managers, or project assistants, and given the current financial situation, the meeting stressed that the role of the Secretariat should focus on mobilising financial support for the Action Plan.

44. Recommendation #3 addressed the issue of possible relocation of the Secretariat. The delegate from Thailand reiterated its willingness to host the Secretariat. However, the possibility would be discussed after the new office premises are established. With this clarification, the recommendation was accepted.

45. Recommendation #4 addressed the issue of geographic focus. The recommendation was slightly modified by the participants of the Technical Workshop (Annex IV, paragraph 5). Dr. Chou clarified that the recommendation did not exclude involvement of countries outside this area, and the Meeting adopted the recommendation.

46. The wording for the recommendation was changed from "Research activities should focus at a more defined geographic area. COBSEA should consider the seas of Southeast Asia and southern P.R. China as the main geographic region..." to the following, "Research activities should put **priority** at defined geographic area. COBSEA should consider the seas of Southeast Asia **including** southern sea areas of China..."

47. Recommendation #5 addressed the issue of inviting other Southeast Asian countries (Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar, Timor Leste) to join COBSEA. After extensive debate on the definitions of the geographic area, "East Asian Seas," and ecological 'borders.' The delegate from Indonesia suggested, and the Meeting agreed that the Secretariat should contact Brunei Darussalam to gauge her interest in participating in COBSEA. The delegate from Indonesia also suggested, and the Meeting agreed that at a later stage, the Secretariat would contact Myanmar and Timor Leste to gauge their interests in the programme.

48. Participants agreed that Recommendation #6 addressing focus areas of the Long-Term Action Plan was an important issue and accepted the recommendation after much deliberation.

49. Recommendation #7 addressed collaboration with regional programmes and projects. On behalf of PEMSEA Regional Programme Director, Dr. Chou informed the meeting that PEMSEA had prepared a regional strategy which has been adopted by the participating countries of the project. PEMSEA is implementing the strategy, and expressed interest to co-operate with COBSEA on any aspect of the strategy. The delegate from China proposed that the wording of the Recommendation be changed from, "...effective **collaborative** arrangements and stronger partnership with other regional programmes/projects be expanded..." to "effective **cooperation and coordination** with other regional programmes/projects, **including ASEAMS**,..." This recommendation was accepted by the Meeting.

50. Recommendation #8 addressed reviving the Association of Southeast Asian Marine Scientists (ASEAMS). In reviewing this recommendation, and after consultation among the delegates from Malaysia and China, the meeting agreed that there is a need for scientific and technical input to support COBSEA's functions. ASEAMS can provide this support. However, ASEAMS needs to organise itself. COBSEA can provide financial support to ASEAMS through a consultancy or other tasks as and when required. The Meeting agreed to incorporate Recommendation #8 in Recommendation #7.

Agenda Item 7. Regional Programmes and Projects Supporting the East Asian Seas Action Plan

7.1 Sida's Support to the EAS Action Plan

51. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the draft implementation plan under the support from Sida. The Secretariat reported on the development of the proposal between Sida and EAS/RCU, and presented the proposed objectives and activities of the draft implementation plan. The Secretariat thanked Sida and the Swedish National Board of Fisheries for their generous support and co-operative work with the staff in EAS/RCU, and appreciated the assistance of SEAFDEC in developing the implementation plan.

52. The representative from Sida provided some background on the underlying objective of Sida's support in the context of international environmental cooperation that has been developed over the past 30 years. Sida noted that there is over 30 years of institutional experience developed from the conferences at Stockholm to Rio to Johannesburg. However, the uneven progress among nations has made it difficult to determine the exact direction to follow, and it has been difficult for countries to fulfil their global commitments. The representative stated that Sida's support is part of Sida's Marine Initiative to address some of these issues for the region. The basis of the support is not to implement specific projects, but to assist the process to improve implementation of the Action Plan.

53. With appreciation of the generous support provided by Sida from all participating countries, there was general support by member countries of the implementation plan. The delegate from China emphasized that COBSEA is an appropriate coordinating body, and can and should coordinate activities, using Sida's support to bring benefits to the region. The Meeting agreed to give clarity to the actual intent of Objective #4. It was agreed that "regional agreement" would be changed to "regional arrangements" (Annex IV, paragraph 6).

54. The delegate from the Philippines raised the need to address the issue of capacity building of participating countries in order to fulfil regional commitments. He suggested that special annual meetings should be held to review and plan the direction of COBSEA's programme. As the Action Plan is changing its approach from project-driven to policy-driven, and given the current financial constraints, the meeting agreed that the next meeting be a special COBSEA session, and should be organised next year.

7.2 Regional Implementation of the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN)

55. The Secretariat presented the progress of ICRAN since its inception in 2001. The ICRAN Project consisted of a substantial part of the Secretariat's work plan in the past two years. The background of site selection, successes, problems, potential, and future plans were presented. The meeting took note of the implementation of this project with interest in its achievement.

7.3 Implementation of the Regional Programme of Action on GPA/LBA

56. The Secretariat noted that this activity was already presented under the ED's report, and the Chair opened the floor for questions. The delegate from Singapore sought clarification on the cooperation between this project and the UNEP GPA land-based pollution project. The Secretariat clarified that indeed the project was implementing the regional component of GPA.

Agenda Item 8. World Bank/GEF Concept Paper

57. The Secretariat introduced document UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG. 17/INF 6, a World Bank/GEF concept paper on developing partnerships for a land-based pollution reduction. This document was received by the Secretariat immediately before the meeting, and participants did not have enough time to thoroughly review the paper. The Meeting noted that land-based pollution is one of the priority areas of COBSEA. From this point of view, the GEF concept paper was a good opportunity. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to circulate to the participating countries the relevant information as available. The meeting also indicated that the process of preparation of the relevant proposal and project document should be transparent to and adequate consultation with all relevant countries in the region.

Agenda Item 9. Workplan and Budget for 2004 – 2005

58. The Secretariat presented the draft workplan and budget, as presented in the document provided to the participating countries before the meeting.

59. The delegate from Indonesia sought clarification on the economic valuation activities that seemed to overlap with those of the South China Sea Project. The Secretariat explained that the activity was not to prepare new guidelines for economic valuation, but rather to examine the existing methods on this issue. The Secretariat informed the meeting that after discussion with the Project Director of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project, the funding allocated for this activity could be used for those countries that do not participate in the South China Sea Project.

60. The delegate from Singapore sought clarification on the 13% project support costs taken from all project funds. The Secretariat explained that 13% project supporting cost was calculated according to the UN financial rules. With understanding of this fact, the meeting requested EAS/RCU to discuss this matter further with United National Office in Nairobi (UNON) on the possibility to reduce the percentage of the project supporting cost.

61. With the clarifications, and corrections made to the budget table, a revised budget was provided by the Secretariat to all the delegates.

62. The meeting approved the workplan and budget for 2004-2005 with modifications. The Meeting approved a total budget of USD 840,000 from the Trust Fund for 2004-2005, and additional funding from external sources for other activities. The final budget is attached to this report as Annex VIII.

Agenda Item 10. Other Matters

63. The delegate from China noted that the consultant's report stated that member countries would like to have stronger ownership of the EAS Action Plan. The delegate requested that EAS/RCU pay more attention to the desires expressed by member countries in the Consultant's report.

64. In accordance with the rules of intergovernmental meetings, delegates are required to submit their credentials, in order to show that the delegate was authorized by his/her government to make decisions on behalf of the country. The invitation letter to this meeting did not mention this point, and delegates did not bring their credentials. The Secretariat was tasked with including this reminder into the next meeting's invitation.

Agenda Item 11. Dates and Place for the Next Meeting

65. The Meeting agreed that the special meeting will be held tentatively in March/April 2005. The Secretariat will identify the best possible time. The Meeting noted China's tentative offer to host the next meeting, which will be confirmed with the proper authorities in China.

Agenda Item 12. Adoption of the Report

66. The Rapporteur introduced the report of the meeting and invited participants to review and adopt the document as a true record of its deliberations. The meeting reviewed, discussed and amended the draft report and approved it as contained in this document.

Agenda Item 13. Closure of the Meeting

67. On behalf of the participating countries, the delegate from Malaysia thanked the Chairperson and Secretariat for their hard work. The Interim Co-ordinator thanked the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Rapporteur, Independent Consultant, and Secretariat for their hard work over the past three days. He reiterated the challenges of moving ahead to implement the new COBSEA strategy, the need to build on existing partnerships, and the appreciation to Sida for supporting the Action Plan. In closing, the Chairperson expressed his satisfaction over the successful meeting, the new policy-oriented direction for COBSEA, his appreciation of Sida's support, his appreciation to the Consultant for providing a foundation to arrive at COBSEA's new direction. The Chairperson also thanked the Secretariat, especially the Interim Co-ordinator for his personal efforts to communicate with UNEP to obtain support to COBSEA. The meeting was closed by the Chairperson at 14:55 hrs on Thursday, 11 March 2004.

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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ANNEX II

AGENDA

1 OPENING OF THE MEETING

- 1.1 Welcome address
- 1.2 Introduction of members
- 1.3 Opening statements

2 ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

- 2.1 Designation of officers
- 2.2 Organisation of work

3 ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA

4 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

5 UNEP/GEF PROJECT IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

6 COBSEA'S STRATEGY

- 6.1 Identification of national and regional priorities, and the mechanisms to address these priorities;
- 6.2 Co-ordination with other organisations and programmes, which have complementary projects with COBSEA;
- 6.3 Financial sustainability of the East Asian Seas Action Plan; and
- 6.4 Secretariat (EAS/RCU) functions.

7 REGIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS SUPPORTING THE EAST ASIAN SEAS ACTION PLAN

- 7.1 Sida's Support to the East Asian Seas Action Plan: Enhance Co-ordination and Sustainability of the East Asian Seas Action Plan
- 7.2 Regional Implementation of the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN)
- 7.3 Implementation of the Regional Programme of Action on GPA/LBA

8 COBSEA'S CONSIDERATION ON THE WORLD BANK/GEF CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR A LAND-BASED POLLUTION REDUCTION INVESTMENT FUND FOR THE LMEs OF EAST ASIA – PHASE 1 INTERNATIONAL WATERS

9 WORKPLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2004 - 2005

10 OTHER MATTERS

11 DATES AND PLACE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

12 ADOPTION OF THE MEETING REPORT

13 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

ANNEX III

INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Financial considerations

Recommendation 1. COBSEA should firmly and urgently address the issue of funding and develop an appropriate arrangement that ensures sustainable operation of the Secretariat and at the same time provides some degree of flexibility in the level of contributions during periods of financial crisis.

Secretariat structure and function

Recommendation 2. The Secretariat should be re-activated to ensure continued coordination and implementation of the Action Plan. A minimum staff structure proposed for the Secretariat is a P5 level Programme Officer and a P3 level Programme Officer, and two support staff.

Recommendation 3. Relocation of the Secretariat should not be considered unless a host institution offers to provide salaries in addition to rent-free premises.

Geographic focus

Recommendation 4: Research activities should focus at a more defined geographic area. COBSEA should consider the seas of Southeast Asia and southern P.R. China as the main geographic region for the implementation of the EAS Action Plan.

Recommendation 5: Attempts be initiated/continued to invite Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar and East Timor to join COBSEA.

Programme focus

Recommendation 6: The focus areas of the Long-Term Action Plan should be considered and a decision taken to proceed with all components or selected ones based on direct relevance to most member states.

Recommendation 7: In the implementation of the Long-Term Plan, effective collaborative arrangements and stronger partnerships with other regional programmes/projects be expanded (e.g. following the model established with AWGCME, which resulted in regional criteria for marine water quality, national marine protected areas, and marine heritage areas).

Recommendation 8: EAS/RCU considers reviving the Association of Southeast Asian Marine Scientists and to involve it as a partner in the Long-Term Action Plan.

ANNEX IV

WORKSHOP SUMMARY TECHNICAL WORKSHOP FOR REGIONAL COORDINATION ENHANCEMENT

Siam City Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand 8 March 2004

1. The "Technical Workshop for Regional Coordination Enhancement" invited national technical focal points of COBSEA member countries to review the independent consultant's report and the draft implementation plan of Sida's support to the East Asian Seas Action Plan. The ASEAN Secretariat, SEAFDEC, and member countries, except Australia, Philippines, and Viet Nam, participated in the workshop. Participants' suggestions and comments on the consultant's recommendations and Sida implementation plan will be presented to the 17th COBSEA Meeting for consideration.

2. Dr. Chou Loke Ming, consultant, presented his report on the review and assessment of COBSEA and the East Asian Seas Action Plan and the recommendations for COBSEA's future. The general conclusion of common views from interviews with national focal points were that countries support the continuation of the Action Plan, increasing contributions to the Trust Fund is difficult and unlikely in the near future, and there is a need for greater regional coordination and integration of activities. Common priority needs included transboundary issues (international waters), capacity development, habitat protection, pollution management, policy development, and public education. Eight recommendations covering financial, geographic, programme, and Secretariat functions were presented. In addition, Dr. Chou proposed some long-term focus areas on specific issues that included:

- Developing and maintaining regional databases and metadatabases;
- Promoting and improving networks of MPAs;
- Restoring marine habitats;
- Assisting with State of the Marine Environment reporting for agencies;
- Reducing land-based sources of pollution;
- Expanding monitoring, assessment, and mapping; and
- Building capacity to counter environmental degradation and educating communities to care for marine resources.

3. Discussions then revolved around coordination, including the differences between current regional programmes, what benefits COBSEA would provide to the region, and the scope of work for COBSEA's future, amongst others.

4. The summary of the extensive discussions is as follows. There was a recognized need, although differing views, by all participants that coordination of activities by COBSEA must be done in such a way to maximize benefits to member countries, and reduce duplication of efforts. The general consensus was that COBSEA should change her approach to a more policy-driven approach, rather than project-driven. This is reflected in the consultant's report, including the need to examine how to assist countries to address their priority needs. This process should also take into account existing regional mechanisms, programmes, and initiatives.

5. Cooperation with other current programmes needs further discussions at national and regional levels. Some participants felt that the future work of COBSEA should focus on the entire East Asian Seas region, with the expert from Korea expressing his interest in the ICRAN Project. On the other hand, other participants felt that COBSEA should focus on Southeast Asia and southern China. It was agreed that Recommendation #4 in the Consultant's report should be re-worded from the original, "Research activities should focus at a more defined geographic area. COBSEA should consider the seas of Southeast Asia and southern P.R. China as the main geographic region..." to the following, "Research activities should put **priority** at defined geographic area. COBSEA should consider the seas of Southeast Asia **including** southern sea areas of China..."

6. The draft implementation plan for Sida's support was presented by the Secretariat, and extensively discussed. There were many concerns on the proposed activities to address the five objectives under the implementation plan. Participants felt that more time was needed to examine the proposed activities. Participants agreed on the overall five objectives, and requested to discuss this issue again at the forthcoming COBSEA meeting. To clarify the actual intent of Objective #4, It was further agreed that "regional agreement" would be changed to "regional arrangements."

7. The meeting closed at 1810 hours on 8 March 2004.

ANNEX V

REPORT OF AD-HOC GROUP ON CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATION NO. 1 (9 Mar 04, 1800 to 1930 hr)

SALIENT POINTS OF DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

- **Consultation's Recommendation 1: Financial Consideration**
COBSEA should firmly and urgently address the issue of funding and develop an appropriate arrangement that ensures sustainable operation of the Secretariat and at the same time provides some degree of flexibility in the level of contributions during periods of financial crisis.
- **Ad-hoc Group** – Formed to discuss and brainstorm possible options for COBSEA's consideration on Recommendation 1.
- **Ad-hoc Group included representatives** from:
 - PR China, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Sida, SEAFDEC, Consultant (Prof Chou LM).

SALIENT POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Taking Note of:

- **UNEP's note of 9 Mar 04 informing that no further financial support is to be provided through UNEP's Environment Fund**
- **There was general consensus with participants of Technical Workshop** for COBSEA to adopt a more policy-driven approach, rather than project-driven.
- **There is general commitment and support by member countries** for the continuation of the COBSEA Action Plan.

Recall that

- EAS Action Plan was established as a **partnership** between Regional Seas Programme with the 10 member countries.
- 1981 Agreement or arrangement that **UNEP will provide overall technical co-ordination of the action plan.**

FOR COBSEA'S DISCUSSION #1

If the above recollection is correct, we should urge UNEP not to withdraw its contribution. Instead, COBSEA should draft and adopt a **resolution** to call upon UNEP on the following:

- Continue to provide funding support or perform role of Secretariat
- Urges UNFP as a partner of EAS Action Plan to commit an annual amount (just like

member country) to the COBSEA Trust Fund.

On our part, the Resolution should call upon member countries to:

- Pay their arrears as promptly as possible
- Maintain members' current levels of contribution whilst consider raising it in future.

On financial matters, the Ad-Hoc Group,

Noted that:

- ***COBSEA's Trust Fund has ~ USD 1 million in "reserves".***
- ***Member countries' voluntary contribution USD 171,600 per year***
- ***EAS/RCU's proposed UNEP's contribution from Environment Fund*** for Year 2004 is USD200,000 (P5 + Preparing national action plans) & for Y2005 is USD152,000.
- Based on min staffing of P5+P3+2 Admin Staff as recommended by the Consultant, EAS/RCU's Proposed Operating Budget is:

Year	Trust Fund	Env Fund	Total
2004	284,500	200,000	484,500
2005	253,500	152,000	405,500

- Activities in the Workplan have to be in line with the EAS Action Plan adopted by COBSEA.

FOR COBSEA'S DISCUSSION # 2

If UNEP's funding from Env Fund is not forthcoming, COBSEA to consider the following possible options as fall-back plan:

Option A: Use Trust Fund to ***pay the full amount (i.e, USD 200,000)*** of UNEP's Env Fund component and highlight to UNEP that this is only ***one-off*** for the budget of Y2004.

Option B: Use Trust Fund to provide ***seed money (e.g. ~USD 100,000)*** to support key priority activities or a quantum of P5, while delaying the implementation of those activities not of priority at this point.

ANNEX VI

RESOLUTION OF THE 17TH MEETING OF THE CO-ORDINATING BODY FOR THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA

Recalling the two intergovernmental meetings in 1981 where overall technical co-ordination of the action plan was vested in UNEP (UNEP/IG.31/6, paragraphs 36-40);

Recognising the constraints under which the Environment Fund of UNEP is currently operating;

Recognising further that UNEP informed the 16th meeting of COBSEA that it might not be in a position to support the future work of COBSEA with the same level of financial contributions from the Environment Fund as in previous years;

Taking note of:

- UNEP Governing Council decision 21/28, Nairobi, 9th February 2001 regarding the strengthening of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme;
- The strategic guidance provided via the meeting of Regional Seas representatives in Nairobi, November 2003; and
- UNEP Governing Council decision 22//2/III and V to strengthen the Regional Seas Programme;

Taking note also of the fact that the East Asian Seas Action Plan was established as a *partnership* between UNEP and the countries of the region;

Thanks the Executive Director of UNEP and the Head of the Regional Seas for the consideration given to provide strategic inputs and commitment of financial support for the period 2004/5;

Urges UNEP , as the key partner of the East Asian Seas Action Plan, to provide sustained financial support to the Trust Fund for core support of the Secretariat and project support in line with implementation of UNEP's Programme of Work;

Urges the governments of member countries to pay their arrears as promptly as possible;

Urges the EAS/RCU to produce as promptly as possible a comprehensive costing for the operation of the EAS/RCU formulated on zero based budgeting reflecting the agreements of the 17th meeting of COBSEA regarding the future directions and activities of the EAST Asian Seas Action Plan;

Urges the governments of member countries to maintain their current levels of contribution whilst they consider once again raising their annual contributions in order to ensure the sustainable operation of the EAS/RCU and the agreed activities.

ANNEX VII

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY MODEL

UNEP Interim Coordinator's conference with UNEP's ED on late evening of 9 Mar 04:

1. Discussion with Snr Mgt
2. Inputs required
 - Revitalisation
 - Ownership, participatory approach
 - Policy relevance
 - Sustainable financing
3. Suggestions from ED
 - Welcomes the revitalization, policy approach, enhanced ownership
 - Recommends UNEP partnership
 - Contribute USD 300,000 for Y2004 & 2005 from ED Reserve
 - Contribute USD 200,000 for Y2006 & 2007 subject to GC's approval
4. Suggestions from Secretariat
 - Policy-driven approach indicators
 - Participatory approach indicators

Possible Model for Sustainable Financing

- USD 1 million in Trust Fund

Year/ Item	2004	2005	2006	2007
Interest Accrued	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
Current Member Countries' Contributions	170,000	170,000	170,000	170,000
Arrears + Possible Increase in Future	-	30,000	30,000	30,000
UNEP's Contribution to Trust Fund	150,000	150,000	100,000	100,000
Total Amt	400,000	430,000	380,000	330,000

- Secretariat – About USD 350,000 p.a.

Task the Secretariat to do the following:

Seed
USD 350 K

Mobilise
USD 1 million

ANNEX VIII

BUDGET AND WORKPLAN FOR 2004 – 2005

			Trust Fund 2004 Proposed Budget	Envir. Fund 2004 Proposed Budget	XE/6030-96-12 2004 (Hotspots)	XE/6030-00-06 2004 (CR monitoring)*	UNF Funds 2004 (ICRAN)	Sida Support 2004 (EAS Action Plan)	Total
10	PROJECT PERSONNEL COMPONENT								
1100	Project personnel¹								
	1101	Programme Officer (P5)	148,000						148,000
	1102	Programme Officer (P-3)	104,000						104,000
	1199	Total	252,000	0	0	0	0	0	252,000
	Consultant w/m								
1200	Consultant w/m								
	1201	ICRAN Project Coordinator					32,900		32,900
	1202	Project Assistants			38,400				38,400
	1203	Prepare guidelines on natl. action plan							0
	1204	Consultant (reg'l coordination, State of Env't)						5,000	5,000
	1205	Consultant (guidelines on econ valuation)						5,000	5,000
	1206	CR remote sensing image interpreter							0
	1299	Total	0	0	38,400	0	32,900	10,000	81,300
	Administrative support²								
1300	Administrative support²								
	1301	Admin Assistant	43,000						43,000
	1302	Senior secretary	43,000						43,000
	1321	Project Manager (General Temporary Assistant)				36,000		14,000	50,000
	1399	Total	86,000	0	0	36,000	0	14,000	136,000
	Travel on official business								
1600	Travel on official business								
	1601	Staff travel	14,000		3,000	4,000	7,500		28,500

	1699	Total	14,000	0	3,000	4,000	7,500	0	28,500
		Component Total							
1999			352,000	0	41,400	40,000	40,400	24,000	497,800
20		SUB CONTRACT COMPONENT							
	2100	Sub-contracts (non-profit organs)							
	2101	GIS Database			5,000				5,000
	2102	Reg. Database on land-based pollution			4,000				4,000
	2103	Assist in prepare nat. action plan			10,000				10,000
	2104	Determination of control level of pollutants	10,000		10,000				20,000
	2105	Small Grant Programme				10,000			10,000
	2106	Small Grant Programme				10,000			10,000
	2107	Small Grant Programme				10,000			10,000
	2108	Demonstration and target site activities					83,000		83,000
	2109	Public awareness activities						3,000	3,000
	2110	Econ. Valuation pilot projects	10,000					10,000	20,000
	2111	ASEAMS	10,000						10,000
	2112	Green Fins				15,000			15,000
	2113	Reg. CR Management Prog.2 (VN)				5,000			5,000
	2199	Total	30,000	0	29,000	50,000	83,000	13,000	205,000
		Component Total							
2999			30,000	0	29,000	50,000	83,000	13,000	205,000
30		TRAINING COMPONENT							
	3200	Group training							
	3201	Cambodia Training - image interpretation				4,000			4,000
	3202	Training in socio-economic monitoring					29,000		29,000
	3203	Training workshop on preparing natl action plans			27,000				27,000
	3204	Training on determination of control level of pollutants			18,000				18,000
	3205	Economic Valuation training	18,000						18,000
	3299	Total	18,000	0	45,000	4,000	29,000	0	96,000

5200	Reporting costs (publications, maps, etc.)							
5201	Printing reports			3,000		5,000	3,000	11,000
5202	Printing leaflets					5,000		5,000
5299	Total	0	0	3,000	0	10,000	3,000	16,000
5300	Sundry (communication, postage, etc.)							
5301	Communication	5,000		1,000	1,144	1,750	1,658	10,552
5302	Postage and pouch	1,000						1,000
5303	Miscellaneous	2,000						2,000
5399	Total	8,000	0	1,000	1,144	1,750	1,658	13,552
5400	Hospitality and entertainment							
5401	Hospitality	2,000						2,000
5499	Total	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	2,000
5999	Component total	12,500	0	4,000	1,144	11,750	4,658	34,052
9999	Total	434,500	0	119,400	95,444	193,650	114,658	957,652
Notes:								
1. The amounts for Programme Officers are the total cost to bring in a new staff or repatriate staff home. In addition to salary, this amount includes common staff costs, such as repatriation, cost of living adjustment, home leave, education grant.								
2. See Note 1.								
* Includes savings from 2003.								

		TF 2005 Proposed Budget*	EF 2005 Proposed Budget*	XE/6030-96-12 2005 (Hotspots)*	XE/6030-00-06 2005 (CR monitoring)*	UNF Funds 2005 (ICRAN)	Sida Support 2005 (EAS Action Plan)	Total
10	PROJECT PERSONNEL COMPONENT							
1100	Project personnel¹							
	1101 Programme Officer (P5)	150,000						150,000
	1102 Programme Officer (P-3)	104,000						104,000
	1199 Total	254,000	0	0	0	0	0	254,000
1200	Consultant w/m							
	1201 ICRAN Project Coordinator					16,000		16,000
	1202 Project Assistants			38,400				38,400
	1203 Prepare guidelines on natl. action plan							0
	1204 Consultant (reg'l coordination, State of Env't)							0
	1205 Consultant (guidelines on econ valuation)							0
	1206 CR remote sensing image interpreter				5,000			5,000
	1299 Total	0	0	38,400	5,000	16,000	0	59,400
1300	Administrative support²							
	1301 Admin Assistant	43,000						43,000
	1302 Senior secretary	43,000						43,000
	1321 Project Manager (General Temporary Assistant)						35,000	35,000
	1399 Total	86,000	0	0	0	0	35,000	121,000
1600	Travel on official business							
	1601 Staff travel	14,000		3,000	3,000	7,500		27,500
	1699 Total	14,000	0	3,000	3,000	7,500	0	27,500
1999	Component Total	354,000	0	41,400	8,000	23,500	35,000	461,900
20	SUB CONTRACT COMPONENT							

2200	Sub-contracts (non-profit organisations)								
	2201	GIS Database							0
	2202	Reg. Database on land-based pollution			1,000				1,000
	2203	Assist in prepare nat. action plan			10,000				10,000
	2204	Pilot activity on determining sewage control levels			28,000				
	2205	Determination of control level of pollutants			10000				10,000
	2206	Mapping in SEA Country				17,000			17,000
	2207	"Green Fins"				15,000			15,000
	2208	Demonstration and target site activities					95,200		95,200
	2209	Regional Experts Meeting #1							0
	2210	Agreement Experts Group Meeting #1							
	2211	Public awareness activities						3,000	3,000
	2212	Econ. Valuation pilot projects						20,000	20,000
	2213	Contracts unspecified							0
	2299	Total	0	0	49,000	32,000	95,200	23,000	199,200
2999	Component Total		0	0	49,000	32,000	95,200	23,000	199,200
30	Training component								
3200	Group training								
	3201	Training - image interpretation				5,000			5,000
	3202	Training in socio-economic monitoring							0
	3203	Training WS on preparing natl action plan							0
	3204	Training on determination of control level of pollutants							0
	3205	Economic Valuation training							0
	3299	Total	0	0	0	5,000	0	0	5,000
3300	Meetings/conference								
	3301	ICRAN Site Manager workshop					25,500		25,500
	3302	Monitoring network					24,000		24,000

5200	Reporting costs (publications, maps, etc.)							
	5201	Printing reports		3,000	2,000	5,000	3,000	13,000
	5202	Printing leaflets				10,000		10,000
	5299	Total	0	3,000	2,000	15,000	3,000	23,000
5300	Sundry (communication, postage, etc.)							
	5301	Communication	5,000	1,000	1,000		1,082	8,082
	5302	Postage and pouch	2,000			2,750		4,750
	5303	Miscellaneous	2,000					2,000
	5399	Total	9,000	1,000	1,000	2,750	1,082	14,832
5400	Hospitality and entertainment							
	5401	Hospitality	2,000					2,000
	5499	Total	2,000	0	0	0	0	2,000
5999	Component total		13,500	4,000	3,000	17,750	4,082	42,332
9999	Total		405,500	94,400	50,000	187,450	125,082	862,432
Notes:								
* The estimated budget for 2005 is what EAS/RCU expects to receive, based on past history of contributions from Trust Fund, Environment Fund and donors.								
1. The amounts for Programme Officers are the total cost to bring in a new staff or repatriate staff home.								
In addition to salary, this amount includes common staff costs, such as repatriation, cost of living adjustment, home leave, education grant.								
2. See Note 1.								